

THE CROWN OF HINDUISM

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pieces of original investigation myself. It was not my wish to do so, but it was inevitable. The truth is that a large number of scholarly studies of very high quality have been conducted within the realm of Hinduism during the last century, but comparatively few of them have viewed Hinduism as a practical religion; and it has been necessary, for the sake of the subject, to regard the religion from that point of view throughout this volume.

The foot-notes indicate with some degree of accuracy my indebtedness to books, but there is no way in which I can show how much I owe to scores of friends, Hindu, Brāhma, and Christian, in every part of India, who have given me unlimited help both in conversation and by correspondence. To all such friends I wish to express here my most sincere gratitude. I owe very special thanks to the Rev. C. F. Andrews of Delhi, who read the whole work in manuscript with extreme care and made many suggestions of great value. I am also indebted to the Rev. D. E. Emlyn Evans of Mirzapore, who has done me the great kindness of reading the proofs.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES

<i>A</i>	<i>Āraṇyaka.</i>
Andrews	Andrews, <i>The Renaissance in India.</i>
<i>Āpastamba</i>	<i>Āpastamba Dharmasūtra.</i>
<i>Āśvalāyana</i>	<i>Āśvalāyana Gṛihyasūtra.</i>
<i>B.</i>	<i>Brāhmaṇa</i>
<i>Baudhāyana</i>	<i>Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra.</i>
<i>Brāhmanism and Hinduism</i>	Monier-Williams, <i>Brāhmanism and Hinduism</i>
Deussen	Deussen, <i>The Philosophy of the Upanishads</i>
<i>Divine Wisdom</i>	Govindāchārya, <i>Divine Wisdom of the Drāvida Saints</i>
<i>E. R. E.</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.</i>
<i>Gautama</i>	<i>Gautama Dharmasūtra.</i>
Glover	Glover, <i>The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire.</i>
<i>Great Epic</i>	Hopkins, <i>The Great Epic of India</i>
Griffith	Griffith, <i>The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki in English Verse</i>
Growse	Growse, <i>The Rāmāyaṇa of Tulsī Dās.</i>
<i>Heart of India</i>	Barnett, <i>The Heart of India</i>
<i>Holy Lives</i>	Govindāchārya, <i>The Holy Lives of the Āṣṭhāvis</i>
Iyengar's <i>Outlines</i>	Śrīnivāsa Iyengar, <i>Outlines of Indian Philosophy.</i>
<i>J. R. M.</i>	<i>International Review of Missions</i>
<i>J. S. R.</i>	<i>Indian Social Reformer</i>
<i>J. R. A. S.</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.</i>
Kaegi	<i>The Rigveda</i> by Adolf Kaegi.
Macdonell	Macdonell, <i>Sanskrit Literature</i>
<i>Madhva</i>	Padmanabha Char, <i>The Life and Teaching of Sri Madhvacārya.</i>
<i>Mānu</i>	<i>Mānava Dharmaśāstra</i> Bühler, S. B. E., xxv.
<i>Modern Jainism</i>	Mrs Sinclair Stevenson, <i>Notes on Modern Jainism</i>

10 ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTE

Oman	Oman, <i>The Mystics, Lovers, and Saints of India.</i>
Parashara	<i>Parashara Gṛhyasūtra</i>
Phillips	Phillips, <i>The Outcasts' Hope.</i>
Pope	Pope, <i>The Tiruvācagar.</i>
Rāmānandā	Max Muller, <i>Rāmānandā, His Life and Sayings.</i>
Rāmānuja	Govindāchārya, <i>Life of Rāmānuja.</i>
Ranade	Ranade, <i>Rise of the Maratha Power.</i>
Ranade Essays	Ranade, <i>Religious and Social Reform, A Collection of Essays and Speeches.</i>
Religious Sects	Murdoch, <i>The Religious Sects of the Hindus.</i>
Sarva Siddhānta	Nallaswāmī Pillai, <i>Studies in Sarva Siddhānta.</i>
S. B. E.	<i>Sacred Books of the East</i> —
Siva Bhakti	Murdoch, <i>Siva Bhakti</i>
Six Systems	Max Muller, <i>Six Systems of Hindu Philosophy.</i>
Śrī Saṅkarācārya	Śrī Saṅkarācārya, <i>His Life and Times,</i> by Krishnasami Aiyar and Sitanath Tattvabhushan
Suzuki	Suzuki, <i>Asvaghosha's Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna.</i>
T.	Tantia.
Trevelyan	Trevelyan, <i>Hindu Family Law.</i>
U	Upanishad
Vasishtha	<i>Dharmasūtra of Vasishtha</i>
Vivekānanda	<i>Speeches and Writings of Swāmī Vivekānanda.</i>
Warren	Warren, <i>Buddhism in Translations</i>
Westcott	Westcott, <i>Kabir and the Kabir Panth.</i>

INTRODUCTION

I. WE have entered upon a new era. All parts of the world have at last been brought into communication with one another. We read news of every land at our breakfast tables. The nations have become one city: we buy each other's goods; we read each other's books; we think each other's thoughts. The unity of the human race has become effective for the first time in human history. From now it will be possible to talk of full human intercourse: in the past all has been but racial and partial. Only now do we begin to hear the music of humanity.

This new condition of things has been brought about partly by extended exploration, still more by the progressive improvement of our means of communication, but, most of all, through the extension of good government over large parts of the earth's area and the effective policing of the waters of the ocean. Without peace on land and sea, our knowledge of the earth's surface and our means of communication would be comparatively valueless. Peace on earth brings goodwill amongst men.

Every one can already see large results arising from this world-wide intercourse. All the civilized peoples are learning from each other. There is a rapid process of assimilation going on, in industry, business methods, education, science, art, literature, morals, and religion, in part most peacefully, but here and there with a good deal of strife and friction.

What the final outcome will be, no man can yet say, but one does not risk much in prophesying that the results are certain to be very great, since the rate of human progress is likely to be indefinitely accelerated under the new conditions.

The evolution of our human life has entered upon a new stage, and incalculable benefits are likely to arise. Only now have human knowledge and skill a chance of doing their best. Only now have the greatest forces an opportunity to act. Much of our past history may be put down under the head of the removal of hindrances to progress. From now onwards a man's work, when it is really valuable, will tell all over the world, while in past ages the best work has often been restricted in its influences for a long time to a small group of peoples or to a single nation. We are very rapidly approaching the moment when every piece of new knowledge will be absorbed by every nation as soon as it is acquired, and when the experience of any one nation, whether in industry, in art, in morality, or in religion, will be at once appreciated, caught up, and used the world over.

Here we restrict ourselves to the results produced, on religion by the arrival of the new period. All the religions of the world that are of any importance have already been brought into effective contact the one with the other, and, in consequence, have begun to display to the utmost the treasures they severally possess. Each is driven by the instinct of self-preservation to seek to win other men to its fold.

Another most important fact in the situation is the rise of the Science of Religion. The scientific consciousness which recognizes the unity of the religious life of man, the evolution hypothesis through which the most varied and seemingly most contradictory phenomena are ranged in intelligible order within the bounds of that unity, and the eager passion to know how the early tribes of men thought about God and sought to approach Him, provided the intellectual conditions required, while the necessary material, viz. information about the religions of the world, became available through the unveiling of the ancient languages of India, Persia, Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt, and through the opening of communications with all the inhabited lands. Our knowledge is still far

from complete; and there are many lines of reflection which have as yet been scarcely thought of; yet the science has reached great proportions, and the results already attained are of inestimable value for thought.

The first outcome of this great accumulation of fresh religious material has been a feeling of deep surprise at the riches of the heritage of some of the great religions, especially in philosophy and in art. Hence, an immense interest has been created in them, not only among students of religion as such, but among the cultured public in general. The growth of this interest these last ten years has been very remarkable. It is reflected in the publication of a large number of popular books on various aspects of Eastern religions. This deepened interest has given birth to a new feeling of brotherliness in religion, a sympathy with men of other faiths, which is most precious and fraught with future good. There is a keen desire for interchange of thought, for increased knowledge, for scientific consideration, and as keen a distaste for controversy. There is a deepened consciousness of the sacredness and intimacy of religion. Certain common elements in the chief religions have been welcomed with enthusiasm. The mere realization that such things exist has produced much sympathy. There is an inclination to regard the great religions as a group of noble peers, worthy of the utmost mutual respect, and a hope that it may be possible for sincere religious men of every race and faith to unite and work together.

Yet it must be confessed that, apart from those who have set themselves to the laborious study of the religions of the world, the new movement is still marked by curiosity rather than by knowledge, and that it is romantic and dilettante rather than scientific or religious. Those who are carried along by the new current and are most ready to talk enthusiastically about religious philosophy, literature, and art are often the very people who are most impatient of the real heart of all true religion. Men and women who have lost hold of their own religion and miss the warm glow of faith in

their lives, are caught by a fancy for some curious or attractive element in another faith; and, without waiting to consider what its practical worth may be, snatch at it and sing its praise. There is thus a good deal that is foolish and unreal in the movement.

Yet these things are on the surface. The new attitude is a prophecy of much better things to come. As knowledge increases and study becomes deeper, many of those who are now scoffers will come to realize the dominant place which religion holds in national life its primacy as the creative power in morality, society, and the family, and the vast results which the centuries work out in the life of a people from a single religious principle. They will begin to see what serious religion is in the life of an individual, and the incalculable value of the truly religious man to his people.

II The progress of the Science of Religion has brought great gains to several departments of scientific inquiry, especially to theology. Among the more notable services rendered by the science are its proof that every race of man is religious, its convincing demonstration that religion is one of the practical activities of man as man, and that it has a great deal to do with the building of human society, the creation of institutions, and the laying of the foundations of morality. It has transformed all studies of individual religions by showing the importance of worship and explaining the purpose of ritual. It has made the function of belief and the position of literature in religion far clearer than before. It has shown us how frequently parallel beliefs and practices have been developed in different nations quite independently, and has thus made us chary of declaring that there has been borrowing, unless there be unmistakable evidence. The anthropological side of the study has thrown a flood of light on the earlier forms of religion, making much comprehensible which was obscure before, and has enabled us to detect many a survival from early times in the religions of civilized peoples.

A But there is one aspect of the religious problem which has

been scarcely touched by the science as yet namely the relative value of the different religions. Only when we have a calculus for determining the practical value of each religion shall we be able to set them in their true relationship to one another. To the present writer at least it seems that students of the science have as yet scarcely thought of this as one of its tasks. There are, it is true, many observations scattered up and down the books which have a bearing on this question. The very classification of religions as tribal, national, and universal, as natural or ethical, as ritualistic or spiritual, and the recognition that the low religions appear to be in many respects a parody of the higher faiths—these all suggest practical judgements. Here and there, also, a writer strikes a clear note, definitely declaring one religion to be of far greater value than others, or pointing out the practical difference between two faiths; yet even he usually writes in such a way as to show that he regards this part of the subject as outside the legitimate work of the science and belonging to the domain of personal opinion. No author is at his ease in giving expression to his convictions, the Christian expresses himself either dogmatically or tentatively, while the anti-Christian is apt to assume a defiant tone. There is seldom the quiet, assured attitude of science, and one meets no attempt to treat the subject in large, orderly, sober fashion.

Yet, after all, is not this the one living issue involved in the study of the science? How does the science impinge on life, if it has no answer to the practical question?

B. Meantime the need of a clear statement of the practical relationship of Christianity to the other great religions has become urgent.

I. The need is seriously felt from the inside.

(a) The coming of the Science of Religion and the universal interest in non-Christian systems have made it most necessary, for both the clergy and the people, that the real relationship of Christianity to other religions should be thought out and clearly expressed. The altered courses of most Theological

Colleges prove that attempts are already being made to meet this need in the education of preachers, but for the man in the pew comparatively little has yet been done.

(b) The missionary movement is steadily growing in strength, influence, and self-consciousness. Its large importance is now clearly perceived and frankly acknowledged by Governments and by scientific men¹. The work is everywhere making progress. The latest census results in India are in complete accord with the growth of the Church elsewhere. Christians consequently want to understand more clearly the aim and the work of the movement. The World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 is the most prominent expression of this desire. But, meanwhile, a method of considerable significance and promise has arisen within the churches. Courses of Mission Study, which deal in scientific fashion with non-Christian religions and with the aims and activities of Missions, are written annually, and are studied by groups of young people in Mission Study Circles.

(c) Missionaries feel far more keenly than ever before the need of stating clearly how their work and their faith stand related to the systems they are face to face with; and they are in great perplexity as to how to put things. In many fields there is a divergence of opinion as to the attitude which the Christian ought to adopt to the non-Christian religions. In India there is a party, small or large, who distinctly disapprove of the attitude adopted towards Hinduism by the Commission of the Edinburgh Conference which dealt with the Missionary Message. See Dr Cairns's masterly summary in the fourth volume of the Report of the Conference.

(d) For the sake of the young churches now growing up in the various Mission fields a sane estimate of the old religions in relation to Christianity is most necessary. The churches will inevitably be influenced by the faiths which form part of their environment. It is therefore of extreme importance that the leaders should understand the forces which are round

¹ *J R M* July 1912 pp 526-528.

about them, in order that they may set themselves to resist the evil and may be ready to welcome all that is good

2. On the other hand, Christians are compelled to seek an understanding of the relation of their religion to other faiths in order to meet objections from the outside. The world-changes to which we have made reference have necessarily led to great changes in religious thought and belief. It was inevitable that Christianity should be deeply affected. Each of its fundamental ideas has reference to all men. Whoever holds the religion with conviction and intelligence necessarily looks forward to its becoming the cherished possession of every human being. Missionary work is the most vital activity of the faith. The Church must expand, or perish, of unbelief. Hence new thought about the religious life of the world necessarily reacts with immeasurable force upon Christianity. Every universal principle stands in similar hazard. The new period has thus quite naturally brought with it new forms of opposition and criticism.

There is a far deeper cleavage of opinion upon the missionary question in Europe and America than there was twenty years ago. While the central party in each church which supports Missions is more convinced and more active than ever; and more money and men are available than at any earlier period, the dull, dead indifference of former years has now formed a conscious centre and expresses itself in demands for the restriction of missionary effort. Formerly one frequently heard the work of Missions depreciated, jeered at, and the results put down at nil. That is in the main a thing of the past. Only where extreme ignorance prevails is such an attitude possible. But there are now many who frankly say that Missions are unnecessary, and some who demand that there shall be no more attempts to win converts, at least from the great religions. The opposition of educated non-Christians to Missions has probably become accentuated in recent years. It certainly has become much more articulate, and much more definite in its condemnation of missionaries. There is a loud

demand, at least in certain countries, that Missions should desist from making converts.

Now this attitude to Christianity, whether at home or on the Mission field clearly implies a certain estimate of the position of Christianity with reference to other religions. When a man says, that it is wrong to seek to persuade a Hindu, a Buddhist, or a Muhammadan to become a Christian, he must have some idea in his mind which limits the rights of the Christian faith in relation to those religions.

From this point of view, then, it is of the utmost consequence that Christians should realize and state frankly the relation of their religion to others. If we cannot justify Missions to the minds of thinking men we must confess defeat, and it is clear we cannot justify them in present circumstances without a clear exposition of the relation of Christianity to the religions of the world.

But, in order that our exposition may keep in close touch with facts, it will be well to realize first of all what the theories are which are put forward as reasons why the Christian Church should not seek to make converts. We begin with two which are so manifestly unsatisfactory as to be scarcely worthy of consideration, yet, since they influence public opinion, it will be well to take a look at them.

(a) There are, first of all, those who urge that the differences between religions are superficial and of no consequence, that, when you look down into the depths of reality, you find that all men really believe the same things. This would reduce all religions to a dead level, and would make the attempt to think out the relationship between any pair of faiths altogether useless. There are comparatively few people who would subscribe to this bald statement, yet it is sometimes urged. In one of her recent books Mrs. Besant states first the fundamental principles of Theosophy, and then proceeds

Its secondary teachings are those which are the common teachings of all religions—living or dead—the Unity of God—the Trinity—His
 the of Spirit into matter and hence the hierarchies

of necessities, whereof humanity is one, the growth of humanity by the unfolding of consciousness and the evolution of bodies, i.e. reincarnation, the progress of this growth under inviolable law, the law of causality, i.e. karma; the environment to this growth, the three worlds physical, astral, and mental, or earth, the intermediate world, and heaven; the existence of divine Teachers superhuman men.

Here we are told that all religions, living or dead, teach this long list of doctrines. What do anthropologists think of the claim that savage religions contain this great catalogue of ideas? What do Christians think of the assertion that Christianity teaches reincarnation? What do Muhammadans think of the assertion that Islam teaches that God's nature is triple? Clearly thinking men can only express their utter amazement that such baseless statements could ever be seriously made.

(b) The second group are both more reasonable and more numerous. They are quite ready to admit that religions differ very deeply in their doctrines, and also in their modes of worship, but they argue that since religion is a practical thing, these differences do not matter. Even in the lowest religions each man knows that he ought to do his duty both by God and man. All religions seek the same God, consciously or unconsciously. Hence it is quite unnecessary to change any one's religion. Frequently the thought is added that each man's religion is the best thing for him. This idea was expressed by a Hindu ascetic named Rāmakrishna Paramahansa.

Every man should follow his own religion. A Christian should follow Christianity, a Mohammedan should follow Mohammedanism, and so on. For the Hindus the ancient path, the path of the Aryan Rishis, is the best.¹

Clearly this statement has only to be looked at to be rejected.

¹ *The Kridale of Life*, pp. 1-2.

² *Rāmakrishna* 177. It is most interesting to realize that this was the attitude of Celsus, the second-century opponent of Christianity. "Over and over Celsus maintains the duty of 'living by the ancestral usages'—'each people worshipping its own traditional deities'." G.O.C. 54

Such a line of argument would justify the foulest religions on earth systems which inculcate cannibalism, human sacrifice, promiscuity incest and every other abomination and cruelty.

(c) But serious people do not seriously believe that all religions are the same, or that it is wrong to try to make a cannibal a Christian. The truth is that these two statements are merely blundering attempts to put into universal form the instinctive feeling, present nowadays in thousands of minds, that the great religions of the world, Muhammadanism, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism, are so noble, and produce such good results that it is a shame to attack them and disturb those who profess them.

This is the foundation on which Theosophy has built itself. The theory is that all the great religions are reconciled in its ample bosom, that there is no longer any need for controversy or for propaganda, but that each faith may live its own life in love and harmony with its neighbours. Many people all over the world have been greatly attracted by this statement, and also by the summons of the Theosophical Society to join in forming a brotherhood of men. The teaching of the Society has been welcomed by many who were without definite religious belief of their own, and in India, Burma, and Ceylon multitudes have acclaimed it as the means that is destined to re-establish the ancient religions.

But, though the programme of love and unity is a most attractive one, and though the summons to brotherhood and human service is something which every Christian must rejoice to hear, yet Theosophy itself is no safe refuge for the present distress. So far from providing a means of reconciling the great religions Theosophy creates another religious system. It is simply a new doctrine with a crude mythology. Mrs. Besant, who is President of the Theosophical Society, in her *Theosophy*,¹ in Jack's series, 'The People's Books,' puts forward as the central doctrine of the system the statement,

that the community of religious teachings, ethics, stories, symbols, ceremonies, and even the traces of these among savages, arose from the derivation of all religions from a common centre, from a Brotherhood of Divine Men, which sent out one of its members into the world from time to time to found a new religion, containing the same essential virtues as its predecessors but varying in form with the needs of the time, and with the capacities of the people to whom the Messenger was sent.

Christianity teaches that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Muhammadanism teaches that Allah sent Muhammad as the final Prophet, Hinduism has its avatāras, but they are no brotherhood of men, but are each an incarnation of the supreme Vishnu while Mahāyāna Buddhism also has its incarnations, but they come from the Supreme likewise. It is quite easy to say that Christ, Muhammad, Krishna, Gautama, and the rest are all members of the brotherhood, and that that reconciles the religions. The reconciliation is effected by cutting the heart out of each, and substituting this new mythology. The truth is that, so far as their central theological ideas are concerned, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Muhammadanism and Christianity stand much nearer to each other than they do to this new dogma. Certainly no sincere Christian, Jew, or Muhammadan can accept a system which detaches religion from God. It stands nearer Hinduism than any other faith, yet many Hindus already protest loudly against the identification of their religion with the system; and as time goes on its true nature will become clear to many who now trust in it. The great success of the propaganda in India is almost exclusively due to its defence of caste and idols. What sort of 'reconciliation', then, does it offer to Christians and Muhammadans?

(d) But the vast majority of those who have come under the sway of the new thought are not at all inclined to adopt the fanciful theories of Theosophy. They have no reasoned statement of their position ready to give to the inquirer, yet both their feelings and their convictions on the question are deep and serious. They fall into two distinct groups.

THE CROWN OF HINDUISM

The first group consists of people in Christian lands, many of them genuinely Christian people, others men and women whose faith has been partly shaken, but all impressed with the importance of the faiths of the East and the obligation lying upon us to treat them honourably. They show an immense interest in these religions. They are hungry for information, eager to listen to a competent teacher, sometimes ready to struggle through hard books. Even if they know but little, they are keen and enthusiastic. They are all inclined to say; These great religions are all so good, they contain so much that is noble, and they train so many good men, that it seems a shame to disturb them in any way. Ought we not rather to be thankful for them and to seek to learn from them?—These ideas have come to them from a variety of sources.

European administrators, judges, army officers, educationalists, and business men come into close personal contact with educated Hindus, Buddhists, and Muhammadans, and find a large number of them men of high moral character, of keen intellect, and of real religious feeling. They frequently appear to be as good men as Christians of the same condition of life are. It is perfectly clear that they get a great deal of help from their religions. They have large joy and deep confidence in them. The question therefore naturally arises, Why should they be teased into becoming Christians?

A few Europeans also come into contact with the quiet population of the villages of Eastern lands and learn to admire their industry, patience, endurance, and charity. These people live a quiet settled life. They are happy in their own way, and there are many beautiful points in their intercourse with one another and in their religion. Quaint touches of spirituality and religious insight flash out in their conversation now and then.¹ Their ideas and their practice

¹ Two Hindu women fell out in the street. One became very violent. The other cried to her and said so calmly, Hush you will hurt the Mahman in you. For the Bab see Chap VI

see to fit very well with the circumstances. On the other hand, they do very well with their religions. Why should they be disturbed? On the other hand, some of those who have become Christians in those lands seem to have lost their good old manners and to have become a travesty of European civilization. Is it worth while doing so much to produce this result?

The practical man is usually quite satisfied with Asiatic lands as they are. These people make good material for governing, and for drilling as soldiers. Business amongst them pays the business man. Things on the whole go very well. From this point of view there does not seem to be any need for a great change. Hence many an Indian civilian, doctor, army officer, and business man tells his friends when he is on furlough that he knows the people of India and he sees no reason why they should become Christians at all.

The revival of Hinduism and the swift rise of the National Movement have made the Indian express himself very forcibly both in speech and in literature. There can be no question that educated India has deeply influenced the opinion of Europe and America these last few years.

The publication of large numbers of translations of sacred texts from the East and of innumerable articles and books expounding the great religions, the loud protests of a few European scholars who, having laid aside Christianity, are favourably disposed towards Eastern religions, the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and the visits of Hindu and Buddhist teachers to Britain and to America have all helped to produce a much higher appreciation of these religions and a deep sympathy with those who profess them.

General considerations have also come in to strengthen this mass of kindly feeling. People are inclined to reason as follows: We do not really know the other world: why should we dogmatize about it? Let us live good lives ourselves and leave others to do the same. Why should we raise religious strife?

Racial and national questions have also their influence. Race is deep and national differences go far. As rulers, we find it necessary to tolerate much, to make large allowances for race. May not the religions of these strange peoples be related to their racial qualities? Here we come very close to Rāmakrishna's idea. The adaptation of these Eastern systems to the peoples and their civilizations is certainly insisted on by many; and the idea is buttressed by the recollection of the fierce character of religious passion when once roused, and by the belief that it is altogether impossible to separate these people from their religions.

There are large elements in these Eastern faiths which attract a certain type of mind. The doctrine of transmigration is most interesting and suggestive. Mystic pantheism draws many more. The great toleration of these religions seems to many minds a most admirable feature. Since they only ask to be left alone, since they are quite willing to tolerate Christianity, why should we not accept the policy?

But, while all this mass of honest thinking and noble feeling is present in the movement, it would be foolish to ignore the fact that in many minds there lies also the idea that religion is not a matter of such importance as to justify the machinery of Missions and the disturbance they cause. This fruit of religious indifference and rank ignorance ought to be clearly distinguished from other factors by all those who are interested either in practical religion or in the advance of religious science.

ii. The second group consists almost entirely of non-Christians who have had a Western education. They admire Western thought, science and social life, and there are but few of them that have not adopted Western habits in some degree. Many of them regularly use English in talking of the things of the mind and the spirit. They usually know something about Christianity. But they are men who have felt in their own lives and in the life of their own community the power of their own religion. They have been created by the The

so ! a lens through which they look out upon the world have been made by it. The past lives in them. Every aspect of their religion, its thought, its philosophy, its cult, its home-life, even what seems absurd to the outsider, is sacred to them. They see the glint of the spiritual world on every part of it. They are quite content with it. Like Plutarch they say,

The ancient faith of our fathers suffices.¹

Jesus knew them and described them:

And no man having drunk old wine desireth new : for he saith, The old is good.²

Others, more conscious of the danger, go a step further and say, 'Our religion is as good as Christianity. We do not set up our religion to be the only religion for mankind, but we do maintain that it is pure, spiritual, stimulating, and satisfying. It pleases us more than any other religion ever could. Therefore we believe it to be as good as yours.' Thus Hindus, Muhammadans, and Buddhists are not only up in arms in defence of their religions, but urge that the missionary in seeking to bring men into Christianity is actually doing wrong. A few extremists would like to see the missionary sent home bag and baggage, but the majority of educated men protest that the educating, civilizing, uplifting work of Missions is far too precious to be dispensed with. Their one objection to Missions is the baptism of converts, the planting of the Christian Church. That, they contend, is not only unnecessary, but is an act of unjust aggression upon the existing religions.

In face, then, of this large body of serious and moderate opinion, it is clear that the Christian must either transform his missionary methods or else justify what he is doing in the face of all the world. This he can do only by setting out clearly how he believes Christianity is related to other religions

¹ Glover, 89.

² Luke 5 39.

There is all the more reason for so doing, because here we have to deal not with a single reasoned opinion, but with a very large mass of powerful and noble feeling, shot through and through with many lines of thought, clear and inchoate, strong and weak.

III. The position which the thoughtful, modern Christian takes up towards other religions may be expressed under the following four heads.

A. There is a certain underlying unity in all religions as there is in the manifestations of every other human function. The human heart and mind are the same everywhere. Hence there is something which links the lowest religion to the highest. There are gleams of light, suggestions of truth, in the most degraded faith. There is an identity which persists throughout the myriad forms which religion takes.

Further, each religion has been of value to the men who have professed it. Every religion has given its followers at least the idea of duty and of the community; and usually also the idea of God and of worship. There has never been a religion that did not uplift men, that did not bring them nearer God.

Yet even that does not express the whole truth. The religion of a savage is the very highest thing he knows, however gross it may be. In its activities his soul reaches its highest exercise. Hence we must recognize that, through his gross religion, the savage can reach God—

That the savage hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened.

As the writer once heard a good man say in a public meeting, 'Religion must be a very simple thing in God's eyes otherwise the simple folk of the world would have no chance at all.' We must believe that it is possible for every human being no matter what his circumstances may be to find his way to God. He truly use all the light he has.

Otherwise, the relation of Father and child does not exist in his case. So the very foundation of Christianity demands this acknowledgement. Our belief in Christ leads to the same truth; for we hold Him to be

the light which lighteth every man,¹

and we believe that even in savage mind God

left not himself without witness,²

and that the very lowest men

show the path of the law written in their hearts.³

Thus through the grossest religion there is a path to God.

Christianity frankly acknowledges that a man may be acceptable to God in any religion. This is stated in the clearest possible language by Peter:

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.

The ladder from earth to heaven is there for the lowest savage as well as for Jacob and the modern man.

B The condition under which a man reaches God is utter sincerity the turning of his whole soul toward the light, the frank acceptance of truth into his heart, straightforward obedience to the very highest he knows. It is this pose of the soul that opens it to heavenly influences, that makes it possible for our Father to enter into personal fellowship with His child. Without this attitude, there can be no true religion anywhere. Beyond this no man can go, however narrow or however wide his knowledge, experience, and opportunities may be. This law then applies to men in every religion.

Take the case of a savage who has been living a faithful life, in accordance with his light, in a coarse cannibalistic religion. He hears Muhammadanism preached, feels the

¹ John 1, 9

² Acts 14, 17

³ Romans 2, 15.

⁴ Acts 10, 34, 35 Cf. also Paul's words. Rom. 10, 12.

reasonableness of monetheism, the pressure of the doctrine of judgement on his conscience, the high moral value of the ethics of Islam. But, for various reasons, he continues his old life and the practice of cannibalism. What is the inevitable result? The religion through which he formerly received help is no longer of any use to him. He has seen truth and has refused to obey it. He is no longer a religious man.

So when a polytheist, coming in contact with Christianity, realizes the folly of idolatry, and feels that the cross and the love of Christ are just what he needs for the transformation of his sin-stained soul and life; if he fail to confess Christ publicly, if he shrink back from acting upon this revelation of religious truth in his inner life, if he continue to bow down to idols, his old faith, however valuable it may have been to him formerly, can never be for him a door into fellowship with God again, for he has turned his back upon the highest, and has made the great refusal.

C Christians acknowledge fully the great and good work that has been done by each of the great religions. We gladly recognize that in them, many saints have been trained, thousands of homes have been purified and uplifted, and multitudes of men and women have found God. We rejoice in the true and fruitful religious experience of these good men. We also recognize that in each of these religions men and women are still being trained in goodness and lifted nearer God. These are the facts on which people in Europe and America and educated non-Christians insist, when they demand that missionaries shall cease to make converts to Christianity. We acknowledge them and thank God for them.

We go still farther. we gladly confess that these great and good results prove the presence of truth in each of these systems:

By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

When, however, certain of our friends go one step farther and say, 'Thus, all these religions are true,' we call a halt, and ask them to state more definitely what they mean. Do they mean to say that each is true in part, or that each is wholly true? that each contains a considerable amount of truth, or that each is the very truth of God? Clearly it can be only the former, for these great religions contradict each other very seriously on many points. Thus we agree with our friends completely, when they say, 'All these religions are good and helpful because each contains much truth.'

It is now necessary to take a look at the points on which the great religions contradict each other, and, in order to make our exposition as clear as possible, we shall restrict ourselves to the great quaternion, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Muhammadanism. These will provide quite sufficient material and illustration. Hinduism teaches that every soul is born and dies many times, Christianity says,

It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this cometh judgement.

Buddhism agrees with Hinduism on this point, but condemns Hindu literature, priests, and sacrifice, and sets forth the Buddha as the omniscient and infallible teacher for all men. Christianity teaches that God is the Father of men, that His Son became incarnate to reveal the Father and to die for the sins of the world, that He is the ideal for all men, and that His moral and spiritual teaching is necessary for all men. Muhammadanism, agreeing with Christianity that men are born and die once, denies all the affirmations of Christianity, and proclaims Muhammad as the last and greatest Prophet, and the Koran as the eternal utterance of God. These oppositions and contradictions are as abrupt and definite as they can well be, and there are many more, quite as clear-cut and irreconcilable. The differences between the great religions are by no means small.

Let us now place beside these facts the contention that the great religions are all so noble and so great that we ought not to make odious distinctions among them, but should recognize them as a band of brothers. Clearly this contention can be maintained only on the ground that the differences between the religions are negligible. They may be regarded as negligible from different points of view. The atheist and the agnostic, acknowledging the value of the moral teaching of the various systems, put aside the differences between them as so much mythology. Many a humble man says, 'I believe my own religion is true, but I recognize that a Hindu or a Muhammadan feels in the same way, and so I think it best not to meddle with questions which I cannot settle, when there is so much good in each system,' some few plead for peace on the ground that the inner spirit of all the great religions is the same, while many a modern student is inclined to say, 'I cannot see into the other world. I do not know the truth on the great subjects of the nature and character of God, the coming of men to birth, and then destiny after death. Why should we dogmatize? Let each religion do all the good it can. We shall study all and sympathize with all.' The point of view varies, but, whatever the point of view may be, the demand that we should recognize these religions as equals and should not seek to make converts rests upon the idea that the differences are negligible.

Now there is only one point here which the Christian challenges. He acknowledges to the full, as we have already seen, that the great religions are of extreme value as compared with lower faiths, that each contains a great deal of truth, and that each produces precious results. Thus far we are all agreed. The Christian simply goes one step beyond the others. He says these differences which so many people regard as negligible are of large importance.

Things are not as they were fifty years ago. The nations of the world are much nearer each other than they were

in these masses of so many of all the peoples and all the religions have been gathered together, and the Science of Religion has escaped from the period of stumbling experiment, and come into an assured kingdom. Meantime, the Christian Church has been in close relations with each of the great religions than ever before, has studied their literatures and their practice, and by daily companionship with their educated men has entered into their thought and spiritual experience. In this matter Christians occupy a position of supreme advantage. No other body of men and women have had the priceless opportunities which Mission work among educated Buddhists, Confucianists, Hindûs, Jains, Muhammadans, and Zoroastrians has brought them. It is on the basis of these accumulated stores of knowledge and of all this practical religious intercourse with non-Christian nations and individuals that the Christian dares to say that the differences which sever the great religions are by no means negligible, but are of extreme importance. He believes, as a result of his study and his experiences, that the matters in which Christianity differs from the other faiths are of supreme practical value and significance for the life of man. Every thinking man sees clearly the superiority of the great religions over the lowest faiths. The Christian sees as distinctly the superiority of Christianity to the rest of the great religions, and he believes the evidence can be set forth with overwhelming force.

The savage gets on, one way or another, with his savage religion; and, as we have seen, it really helps him, does him good. But now, let Muhammadan civilization reach his village. He and his gradually pick up the elements of a higher culture, and, as the years go by, their thoughts are widened. Will his ancient savage faith still suffice? Will it now be able to do him good, to stimulate him to the best he is capable of? Clearly, it cannot, for it belongs to the lower stage of knowledge and thought which he has left behind. He is not content with his old faith or lives an unphilosophical religious life. This is the case with all the great religions. A religion is of value

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to a people only so long as it is the very highest the people know. Nor is the reason hard to see. Religion is the creative, organizing, stimulating, kindling power in human life—how can it lead men on, if it is not in advance of them? When most of the leading ideas of a religion have become incredible to its people, they may continue to observe its ancient practices, but clearly it cannot exercise the old influence over their minds and hearts. The harvest which was reaped from the faith when it was alive will not spring up from it now that it is dead.

The whole world has entered upon a new stage of existence, the stage of universalism. We are now compelled to think in terms of the human race. Nations whose horizon until recently was bounded by their frontiers now find themselves talking of all the continents. It is not merely that we are interested in world-politics. Moral questions have become interracial and international: the treatment of Indians in South Africa is a case in point. All the civilizations are now clashing; all the religions have met face to face. The villagers of Bengal, of Shantung, of the Tokaido have been transformed into citizens of the world. Hence the proportions and the relations of things have changed. New ideas forcibly take possession of whole populations, and change the face of things in a day.

These things are of the utmost significance to the Christian. He believes that, in the light of the new circumstances of the nations, the practical differences between Christianity and the other great religions now stand out in startling vividness. The new age, with its world-wide relations and world-wide thought, subjects every business method, every moral rule, and every religious belief to a terrific strain and test. Customs and laws which for centuries have proved equal to the ordinary demands of a people's life are now creaking, crashing, and falling to

An educated Jain said to a friend of the writer the other day 'My religion is a d y e religion.'

pieces like the spars of an old ship caught in a cyclone. The needs of the new time, so far as we can see, can be met only by Christianity. Not in arrogance, not in partisanship, do we say this, but with wide open eyes and with full consciousness of the stupendous character of the claim we make.

In this volume an attempt is made to substantiate in some degree this tremendous claim in the case of Hinduism. The phenomena of religion are so varied, and require to be stated with so much precision and care, that a single study is much more likely to be useful than a scamper over the whole vast field would be. The rest of this Introduction will state the way in which the relations between Christianity and Hinduism present themselves to the writer, and the method which will be followed in bringing the two religions into comparison in the chapters of the book.

IV. We shall keep in closest touch with facts and also find an excellent starting-point for the development of our position, if we begin with an objection which is frequently urged against Christian Missions in India to-day. Educated Hindus regard the missionary propaganda as an unjustifiable attack on the national genius and spirit. Christianity is objected to not as being untrue, but as being destructive and denationalizing. The following quotation from a Hindu writer puts the charge quite forcibly.

The missionary is the representative of a society, a polity, a social system, a religion and a code of morality which are totally different from our own. He comes as a belligerent and attacks our time-honoured customs and institutions, our sacred literature and traditions, our historical memories and associations. . . . He wishes to destroy our society, history, and civilization. . . .

He is the arch-enemy who appears in many guises, the great foe of whatever bears the name of Hindu, the ever-watchful, ever-active, irreconcilable Destroyer of the work of the Rishis and Maha Rishis, of that marvel of moral, intellectual, and civic achievement which is known as Hindu civilization. Let us labour under no delusions on this point. You may forget your own name, you may forget your mother. But do not for a moment forget the great, all important fact that the missionary

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is the most dreadful adversary you have to meet - the greatest enemy of dharma and Hindu national life in the present age¹

There is no mistaking the meaning of these sentences. They are clear and to the point. We believe also that the words will create sympathy in every heart. The modern mind makes a deep response to the national spirit.

It is quite true that the destruction to which the writer refers is going on. Serious havoc is being wrought in the ancient structure of Hinduism. It is also true that Christianity is one of the forces that are disintegrating the religion, but it is only one of several, and the destruction would go on almost as rapidly as ever, even if every missionary were deported from India to-morrow.

The missionary's power of destruction is subject to a very effective automatic check, and his will to destroy is limited by the very nature of the aim he has in view. Many people imagine that the missionary's addresses are a tissue of exposures and condemnations. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Destruction is of no service to the Christian cause. Total loss of faith does not make a Hindu a Christian. A Christian is made only by personal submission to Christ and spiritual union with Him. Hence Christian addresses must be filled with spiritual wisdom and power if they are to do any good. I have listened to hundreds of addresses delivered to educated Hindus, Muhammadans and Buddhists by men of different nationalities and churches, and I believe at least eighty-five per cent. of all the matter has been pure Christian teaching, uttered without reference to any other religion. About ten per cent. of the addresses, I should think, have been comparative studies, dealing with some aspect of Christianity and Hinduism, or some other faith. Even this small number of mixed addresses would not have been given, were it not that non-Christian audiences are very eager to hear such comparisons. Missionaries would have larger

¹ Prof. Har Dayal. The passage is quoted by Coomaraswamy, *Essays*
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audiences if they were willing to deal more with the religions, but they prefer to give Christian teaching to smaller numbers. In all the hundreds of meetings I have attended, I have scarcely ever heard a disrespectful sentence used with regard to any non-Christian faith. Even if a missionary were unwise enough to wish to attack Hinduism with hard words, he would not dare to do it, for no educated audience would stand it. In Mission schools and colleges the teaching is almost purely Christian. One hears only an occasional reference to Hinduism.

The case is somewhat different with missionary literature. A much larger proportion of books deal with Hinduism and the other religions. And here the writer readily confesses that the missionary record is not clean. Down to some ten or twelve years ago a considerable number of Christian books published in India contained harsh judgements, denunciatory language, and, here and there, statements that were seriously inaccurate. But that is now almost altogether a thing of the past. The men who write to-day have a far more competent knowledge of the religions they deal with, and the publishing societies will have nothing to do with harsh language and denunciation. But the main point to be noticed is this, that such wrongdoing brings its own penalty and corrective with it. Hindus simply will not read such material, and they mark the man who is guilty and will have nothing to do with him.

Thus the direct destructive power of the missionary is very strictly limited. But Christian teaching by itself introduces new ideas into the Hindu mind; and, in so far as these are wider, deeper, more ethical, more spiritual than the ideas of Hinduism, they do undoubtedly weaken Hindu faith. But here once more there is the double safeguard: the Hindu need not listen unless he choose to do so, and the new teaching can find entrance only if it be very distinctly superior to the old.

The forces that are in the main destructive of Hinduism stand out quite clear. Everything Western brings with it an

atmosphere which is most inimical to the old faith. Modern education tells with incalculable force on every student's mind. English literature, modern science, modern inventions, European business methods and the principles of Government action in India are all disintegrating agents of great efficiency.

But there is another force which must not be forgotten—no one delivers such direct or such deadly attacks on Hinduism as the educated Hindu does. The following are extracts from an article by the very writer whose condemnation of the missionary as the arch-enemy of India we have just read.

Metaphysics has been the curse of India. It has blighted her history and compassed her ruin. It has converted her great men into miserable quibblers, and led them into useless channels of inquiry and effort. It has been the dangerous will-o'-the-wisp of Indian intellect during many centuries. It has elevated sophistry to the rank of an art and substituted vain fancies for knowledge. It has condemned India's intellect to run in the same old groove for hundreds of years. It has blinded her seers and led them to mistake phantoms for realities. . . . Arrogant, pretentious, verbose and purling it has taken its cackling for an oracle and its fantastic word-towers for solid piles of thought-masonry.

While so much transcendental nonsense is being perpetrated fumes are desolating the land, pestilence and malaria hang like a pall on town and country, and there is not a single decent representative institution, technical institute, laboratory or library in the whole country. Science, economics and politics are anathema to the enlightened men of India. They love only the eternal verities and the deep secrets of theosophy or brahma-vidya. My friends, while you are going into ecstacy over the intolerable twaddle of many of your Shastras and quoting Schopenhauer and Max Muller in their praise, the world is stealing a march on you by scientific research, economic reforms, and political progress. While you are explaining to your people the ineffable joys of trance or 'samadhi', another trance is already upon them—the trance of starvation and the deadly pest. The Upanishads claim to expound 'that, by knowing which everything is known'. This mediæval quest for 'the absolute' is the basis of all the spurious metaphysics of India. The treatises are full of absurd conceits, quaint fancies, and chaotic specula-

¹ Prof. Har Dayal in the *Modern Review* July, 1912. Another article by the same writer, containing similar statements with regard to other aspects of the cult, appeared in the magazine in November 1912.

tions. And we have not learned that they are worthless. We keep moving in the old rut, we edit and re-edit the old books instead of translating the classics of European social thought. What would Europe be if Frederic Harrison, Bueux, Debel, Anatole France, Hervé, Haeckel, Giddings, and Marshall should employ their time in composing treatises on Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas, and discussing the merits of the laws of the Pentateuch and the poetry of Beowulf? Indian pundits and graduates seem to suffer from a kind of mania for what is effete and antiquated. Thus an institution, established by progressive men, aims at leading our youths through Sanskrit grammar to the Vedas *via* the Six Darshanas! What a false move in the quest for wisdom! It is as if a caravan should travel across the desert to the shores of the Dead Sea in search of fresh water! Young men of India, look not for wisdom in the musty parchments of your metaphysical treatises. There is nothing but an endless round of verbal jugglery there. Read Rousseau and Voltaire, Plato and Aristotle, Haeckel and Spencer, Marx and Tolstoy, Ruskin and Comte, and other European thinkers, if you wish to understand life and its problems. . .

India has hundreds of really sincere and aspiring young men and women, who are free from all taint of greed and worldliness, but they are altogether useless for any purpose that one may appreciate. They have established monasteries in remote nooks in the mountains in order to realize the Brahman. Instead of bearing the heat and burden of the day along with their fellow men, they aim at reaching a superior stage of illumination by practising all sorts of mysterious postures and other funny devices of a crude mysticism. . .

'Samādhi' or trance is regarded as the acme of spiritual progress! How strange it is that a capacity for swooning away should be considered the mark of wisdom! It is very easy to lose consciousness if one has strong emotions and a feeble intellect. That is why ladies faint so often on the slightest provocation. But in India samādhi is the eighth stage of yoga, which only 'paramahansas' can reach. These be thy gods, O Israel! To look upon an abnormal psychological condition produced by artificial means as the sign of enlightenment was a folly reserved for Indian philosophers.

This type of writing is by no means uncommon to-day in Indian journalism. The following appeared as a leading article in the columns of the *Bengalee*,¹ the leading Hindu paper in Calcutta the editor of which is Mr. Surenchandra Banerjee, the noted nationalist.

We have referred in our previous issues to the fact that Hindu India is at present divided into camps—the camp of the orthodox who hold that tradition lies in every Hindu conforming rigidly and scrupulously to the rules and observances of social life handed down from the past, and that of the unorthodox men who under the inspiration of Western culture and Western ideals have been dreaming of building up a new India by transplanting into their country the spirit of the social, industrial and political institutions of Europe. It requires little reasoning to convince oneself that the extreme conservatism of the orthodox section of the Hindu community which finds itself fulfilled in an unswerving adherence to existing institutions and looks upon the least modification or innovation upon them as a profanity and a desecration, is necessarily the negation of progress. It is born of the conviction that every practice and every custom at present current in Hindu society has had a divine origin, and that it is consequently no less a sacrilege to depart therefrom than it would be to deny the inspiration of the Vedas.

But it is clear that the community committed to such a creed is doomed to stagnate and must eventually go under in the modern struggle for existence into which all the nations of the world have been forced by the annihilation of time and space through steam and electricity. Not a people in the world but is revising and readjusting its institutions, its traditional ideas and ideals to the new conditions, to the stern circumstance that the nation that aspires to occupy a place on the stage of progress has now for its competitors not only its neighbours but all the peoples of the world. What chance has India to keep herself, or even to be within a measurable distance, of the sister nations in progressive advancement, with her sworn allegiance to a pattern of society which was suited to the conditions of a thousand years ago?

Let us take a few instances. We have worshipped the Goddess of 'Sakti' (the energy) for centuries, how is it that through those very centuries we have remained so weak and helpless as a nation? We are the devout worshippers of 'Sarasvati' (the goddess of learning), and at the same time have received a scant share of her blessings. The priests who are the monopolists of the religious rites and ministrations are for the most part as innocent of Vedic knowledge at the present day as the 'Sūdra' was in the days when the gates of knowledge were shut against him by the iron rules of castes. We offer our devotions to 'Lakshmi' (the goddess of wealth) every recurrent year, and we remain none the less a nation of paupers.

The orthodox Hindu makes a fetish of certain rules of hygiene formed by his ancestors in the dim past—he regards as sin f

instance, to take his meals without bathing, or to remain in unwashed clothes for more than a day, but, with all his religious devotion to the traditional rules of cleanliness, he betrays a strange indifference to the principles of sanitation evolved by modern science though plague and cholera and all the other diseases that are generated in spite of the decimating thousands of his fellow men year after year. One has only to be in a Hindu's house for a day to discover his ignorance of elementary sanitary principles in contrast with his particular conformity to the few rules of sanitation enjoined upon him by tradition. One would go grievously wrong in persuading oneself that the Hindu is apathetic to the rules of sanitation and the other life-saving injunctions of modern science, because he had transcended, by virtue of a strenuous spiritual discipline, the human craving for life. He loves life no less dearly than the passionate worldlings of the material West as he calls Europeans.

The Hindu father blesses his son's wife with the invocation 'May she be like Sati'. But was there room in ancient Hindu life for the Philistinism which actuates the modern Hindu father to huckster and chaffer over the price of his son with the unfortunate person in search of a bridegroom for his daughter? It is evident even to the casual observer that extreme orthodoxy is without a soul to save it from the destructive influences that impend over it from all sides.

The orthodox Hindu clings, in the name of religion and morality, to dead forms and mummied institutions from which the informing spirit has long departed. Is not the practice of worshipping God at prescribed intervals of the day and the year, in a language which the worshipper in many cases does not understand, as mechanical as the automatic working of a machine? Is there the least trace of life in a system of rites which demands the punctilious performing of a number of ceremonies on the sole ground that these have been performed through the preceding centuries? Ask the Hindu why he wastes his substance and gets into debt over the celebration of his daughter's marriage; his honest answer will always be 'because his forefathers have done so'. Inquire of the bridegroom what he has understood of the sacrament he has gone through, what he has understood of the Mantras (Vedic texts) he has uttered at the dictation often of an ignorant and mispronouncing priest, he will tell you he has not understood much or perhaps anything at all. But to his mind that is of no moment, for has he not fulfilled his duty by conforming to the directions laid down in the Shastras (Hindu laws)? But surely, in the days when Hinduism was living, the Hindu who said his prayers to his God did so in full consciousness of what he was saying: the young bridegroom uttered the sacred Mantras in full cognizance of their purpose and power.

We will not multiply instances. But this much is clear, that when a people's religion and rites have sunk into soulless formulae they can exercise no corrective or controlling influence over, they must cease to be in intimate relationship with its daily thought and life. And so it is in our country. The champion of orthodoxy, conforming as he does to the fossilized forms of a religious and moral code which have long ceased to embody the living spirit, is most un-Hindu in the family affairs of his life.

We may also quote a few paragraphs from an article which appeared in the *Madras Christian College Magazine* in April, 1912, from the pen of a Hindu, Mr. V. Kunhikannan.

Probably few nations in the world, ancient or modern, have been more superstitious, more credulous, more gullible than the Hindus. It is a most significant and noteworthy fact that even at this distance of time, even in this budding twentieth century, in an age of triumphant intellectual and scientific advance unparalleled in the history of the human race, many things which have been burnt to ashes under the all-embracing fire of modern science and modern thought, are still piously retained by the vast majority of the Hindus.

Whosoever has eyes to see and uses them cannot deny that a marvellous religious revival has actually set in among the Hindus within the last few years . . .

But, however pleasant it may be to contemplate this aspect of the revival, no one can shut his eyes to the all too visible recrudescence of ancient superstitions which has accompanied the more truly religious revival. It is most deplorable that, with the luxuriant growth of the corn, much weed has also sprung up to hinder the ripening of the true grain.

It is very painful, but nevertheless true, that the Theosophical Society is largely, if not mainly, responsible for this state of affairs at the present time. It is not a little amusing to find learned Theosophists defending and popularizing even the worst superstitions of the Hindus and trying to find an occult meaning for every tradition, rite, and ceremony which we have outgrown by the evolution of the intellect and the increasing knowledge of Nature and her laws. No doubt Theosophy has contributed not a little to the present religious revival of the Hindus. But if it has done much that is good and noble, it has also done harm through attempting in these modern days to make us believe that all the stories of the Puranas are historical facts, that behind every physical phenomenon a God is at work, that idolatry and the worship of the many gods is right, that when a man dies the bodies of his near-

relations are literally polluted, that there is an occult use and purpose in the meaningless ritual and ceremonies of the Hindus, and so on. It is absolutely useless and futile to teach such things in this age in which reason and intellect predominate. Every critical observer sees that modern thought has almost completely undermined the peculiar Hindu ideas and customs. The framework of that mighty system of religious and social organization has well-nigh broken down, and it needs no prophet to say that at no distant date a complete re-arrangement of things will be the result.

It is quite surprising to find even to-day Hindus who abhor the idea of foreign travel on the strength of the supposed injunctions of the Shastras against it. The practice of excommunicating transgressors of this rule is still prevalent among the higher castes. Upon a superstition so glaring comment is needless.

Again, I have often noted with pitying interest how even educated Hindus stand up in reverential awe and bow down with clasped hands before the lamp lighted at dusk and shown upon the verandah in every Hindu home. They are bowing to the fire-god, it appears! It is intelligible that in times of primitive ignorance men should have personified the forces of nature and worshipped them as gods, being wonderstruck at the mysteries of Nature. They saw the glorious sun and thought it was a god and began to worship the same. But what is to be thought of the modern Hindu who follows suit, in spite of the advancement of knowledge of Nature and her secrets?

Again, it is a sorry spectacle to witness Hindus still worshipping the village gods and goddesses in the most hideous and superstitious manner. In my own place there is a 'kavu' (temple) where thousands of fowls and sheep are every year butchered for the propitiation of the supposed god and goddess. The sacred temple is literally transformed into a slaughter-house. Can any man conceive a more horrible and degrading way of worshipping the Supreme Father of the universe?

Another superstition is the belief that our sins will be washed away by bathing in the water of the Ganges and other sacred rivers and by visiting sacred (?) cities like Benares. For this purpose millions of Hindus spend all their hard-earned money in visiting such places and bathing in the waters of such rivers, thinking that thus their sins will be forgiven. Could any idea be more primitive? If we can commit sins and wash them away by bathing in the waters of certain rivers, how easy have things become! Such ideas are most dangerous to man's moral evolution. They encourage the commission of sin by holding out the hope of cleansing through the holy water of the Ganges.

Once more, Hindus waste a lot of money by performing the she-shakriyas after death ceremonies of the dead such as the p. nam

shraddha, &c.) We have absolutely no evidence to show that the dead derive any benefit at all from such ceremonies, and, if the doctrine of karma be true, it is clear that a man's suffering after death will be exactly according to the evil deeds done by himself in his mortal existence, and he will have to pay the debt to the last farthing. How then can shraddha afford him any benefit? It is as yet unexplained how certain rites performed here in the physical world can affect those who are supposed to be in some other spheres which are anything but physical. Unless and until a clear explanation is forthcoming, no rational man has any right to perform acts the use of which is entirely unknown to him.

Another startling superstition is that small-pox and cholera are due to the visitation of certain goddesses. The goddess is angry, for some reason or other, and hence the outbreak of the epidemic. Although Western science has opened our eyes to the real cause and prevention of these fell diseases, yet the vast majority of Hindus piously retain the old belief to their eternal shame and degradation. Again, if any disease occurs in a house an astrologer is consulted before the physician is called in.

Every one will realize what a potent destructive influence such writing as this by Hindus must exercise on the young Hindu mind. What missionary would ever dare, or wish, to write in such a strain?

Perhaps most readers will now agree that, whether missionaries are to be condemned as the arch-enemies of India or not, a far more important matter has come in sight, namely this that, whoever may be to blame, Hinduism is being disintegrated. This is the great fact which has to be realized. The ancient religion of India is breaking up. The following chapters will give abundant proof of this fact. Each of its great old religious ideas is fading out of the minds of her educated men. They are steadily decaying, and there are but few signs of fresh integration.

It is also clear that the cause of the break-up of the old faith is the coming of the new era. The thought of the West creates a new climate which is fatal to Hinduism. The air is too rarified. Its fundamental principles shrivel up in the new atmosphere. Those who have entered the world of Western

ultimately simply cannot hold them. Many proofs of this will appear as we proceed. The third article quoted above states the fact very clearly in two sentences:

Every critical observer sees that modern thought has almost completely undermined the peculiar Hindu ideas and customs. The framework of that mighty system of religious and social organization has well-nigh broken down.

Thus Christianity, so far from being an intruder at this time, is most seriously required to sow the seeds of spiritual religion, and healthy moral life. Thoughtful Indian leaders frankly recognize that the ethical and religious influence of missions is of extreme value in this time of trial; and every one who has been in close touch with the educated classes realizes that they need moral help most seriously. But we may go farther. If 'the framework of that mighty system of religious and social organization has well-nigh broken down', is it not high time to bring to the mind and heart of India a new system, fit to stand the strain and stress of the age, and equal to the task of stimulating the Hindu people to the noblest spiritual activity? This supreme need will steadily become more apparent as the decay of Hinduism proceeds.

It will now be well worth our while to return to the charge, that Christianity is a destroying and denationalizing force, and try to see what is behind it.

A. The first point to be realized is that this is an indictment which has been laid against the religion at many points in its history from the very beginning. At a meeting of the Jewish Council, the case of Christ was discussed, and the verdict was,

What do we? for this man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.

But the high priest said

Ye know nothing at all, nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not¹

In consequence they handed Him over to the Romans and had Him crucified. When Paul and Silas preached in the Roman colony of Philippi in Macedonia, they were brought before the city magistrates, and what their accusers said was,

These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive or to observe, being Romans²

The authorities of the Roman Empire considered the religion so inimical to the customs and laws that regulated civilized society that they made the very profession of Christianity a crime, in the eye of the Roman law Christians stood on a level with robbers, and from time to time during the first three centuries fierce persecutions broke out in which countless thousands of men and women suffered death for their faith.

History has repeated itself in modern times. In the sixteenth century Christianity was introduced into Japan, and a considerable section of the people became Christian, but in the seventeenth century the Government became afraid that the movement might prove disloyal, and in consequence they forbade the profession of the religion, and stamped it out in such a fierce persecution as has seldom been witnessed.³ It was a similar idea that led to twenty-six years of persecution in Madagascar. Finally, the Boxer rising in China, only thirteen years ago, in which thousands of Chinese Christians laid down their lives for Christ, sprang from the idea that it was a foreign and denationalizing faith.

It is thus clear that there is some feature of the religion which inevitably excites suspicion in this way. It is not

at all strange that Hindus should think and speak as they do.

B. But let us look at the subsequent history

1. Is there any thinking man to-day who believes the Jews acted wisely in getting Christ crucified? No all men now acknowledge that the teaching and the life of Jesus were the healthiest and holiest influences of the time, and that, so far from being a danger to nationality He was the only wise friend the nation had. If the Jews had accepted Him, they would have retained the nationality which within forty years they flung away in war with Rome. So far from destroying the Jewish religion, Jesus has made the God of Abraham, the Scriptures of Israel, and the history of Israel the heritage of the whole human family.

2 Turn to the Roman Empire. What has the course of history shown? It is now plain that in the early Christian centuries the ancient religions were dying, inevitably passing away. The Roman emperors, conscious of the danger, sought to prop them and revive them, and they believed that in Caesar-worship a new living centre had been found for the old faiths; but it was all in vain. Christianity, so far from being a dangerous foe, was precisely the friend the great Empire needed. Constantine realized the truth and acted on it. Not only the safety of the old Empire, but the life and health of Europe, nay the promise and possibility of the whole modern world, were aboard that frail bark which the emperors sought so industriously to wreck.

3 It is also most significant that it is in Europe and America, where civilization has felt the influence of Christ most deeply, that the modern self-governing peoples have appeared. Autonomous nationality, the ideal towards which the Muhammadan powers and the ancient peoples of Asia are now straining, is the product of a Christian atmosphere.

4 Commodore Perry appeared in Yedo Bay in 1853, in 1854 the Japanese Government signed the treaty which opened Japan to the world and in 1858 missionaries entered

the country. But the profession of Christianity was still interdicted. In 1868 a fresh edict was placed on the public edict-boards, which ran :

The evil sect called Christian is strictly prohibited. Suspicious persons should be reported to the proper officers, and rewards will be given.¹

The representatives of the foreign powers protested against the edict, but the Government persisted until 1872, when the edicts were removed, Christians in prison were released, and those in exile were allowed to return home. Thus it is only forty-one years since Japan gave up the persecution of Christians.

Yet on February 25, 1912, the Japanese Government held a Conference in Tokyo with the express purpose of strengthening the moral forces at work in the country; and to that Conference not only Buddhists and Shintoists, but Christians were invited. There were present, by Government invitation, thirteen Shintoists, fifty-one Buddhists, and seven Christians.²

Clearly the Japanese Government had learnt a lesson in the course of these forty years.

5. The Boxer rising, in which many missionaries and many thousands of Christians were murdered as enemies of the national life, took place in 1900. Yet Sun Yat Sen, the leader of the Revolution which made China a Republic, is a Christian, many of the most prominent nationalist leaders are Christians, Yuan Shi Kai, the President of the Republic, is a personal friend of missionaries, and had a missionary's daughter to educate his children, and on the 17th of April last the Chinese Government requested that prayer should be offered for China in all Christian churches throughout the Empire.

6. Even in India to-day we believe the real character of the religion is steadily becoming clearer. It is quite true that

¹ Murray's *Japan* (Story of the Nations Series) 379

² *I R M.*, July 1925 55.

the infinitesimal Christian communities mere pin-heads amid the vast masses of the Hindu and Muhammadan population, have, in the past, felt it necessary to keep very much to themselves, in order to preserve in purity the precious truth committed to them, but the non-necessity of that hour is now passing away, and Christian men and women will henceforward take a rapidly increasing share in the national life.

Even now the signs are clearly visible to every one who has eyes. Is Christian work among the Outcastes denationalizing? Let the Brāhma, the Ārya, and the Hindu answer, who imitate the missionary to the limit of their power. Are Christians denationalized when they sit on the bench as Magistrates, or serve as members of District Boards or Municipalities? How would women's hospitals in India be staffed apart from Indian Christian girls? How many Hindu schools for girls employ Christian women as teachers? Do educated Hindus become denationalized when they become Christians? Was there a truer Nationalist in India, from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, than Kali Charan Banerji? He was a prominent member of the Indian National Congress from its inception to his death; he was elected by the graduates to represent Calcutta University on the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and he was a personal friend of every prominent Indian of whatever creed.¹ Or is Christian education denationalizing? We venture to think that the following vignette from the pen of a Hindu² will become classical

Though cut off from the parent community by religion and by prejudice and intolerance, the Indian Christian woman has been the evangelist of education to hundreds and thousands of Hindu homes. Simple, neat, and kindly, she has won her way to the recesses of orthodoxy, overcoming a strength and bitterness of prejudice of which few outsiders can have an adequate conception. As these sentences are

¹ See his *Life* by B. R. Barber published by the C. L. S. I.

² From *The Hindu*. The passage was quoted in the *Calcutta Press* of 1908.

being written, there lies before the mind's eye the picture of scores of tiny, gentle girls, trudging hot and dusty streets barefooted, under a scorching sun, to carry the light of knowledge to homes where they will not be admitted beyond the ante-chamber, and where they cannot get a glass of water without humiliation, yet never complaining, ever patient. To these brave and devoted women wherever they are, friends of female education all over the country will heartily wish 'God-speed'.

It thus seems to be clear that the suspicion that Christianity is a destructive and denationalizing force, despite its strength and persistence, is, at least, in large measure, a mistake.

C. Can we then specify what element in Christianity it is that leads men in every land to think that it is destructive and denationalizing?

Jesus comes to each individual, saying,

Follow me

He then explains what is implied in this invitation -

If any one wish to come after me, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross, and follow me¹

This most serious act, in which a man renounces himself and accepts Christ as the Lord of his life, necessarily involves the giving up of the worldly life, and also the renunciation of any other religion he may have been living by. If he is a follower of one of the great old national faiths, this demand usually seems to him a most unreasonable thing. A national religion has a mass of national ideas, customs, and forms of life associated with it. Religion and patriotism are in it intertwined. In most of the ancient nations, the man who did not recognize the national gods was regarded as a bad citizen. That was one of the counts in the indictment against Socrates. Thus to men trained in such a faith Christ inevitably appears to be an enemy not only of the national religion but also of the national life.

Christianity thus seems bad enough in its relation to the

individual at the very outset. But things assume a far worse aspect when a number of men leave the national religion and become Christians. It then seems that the very existence of the national religion is threatened. Christianity is a new, unheard-of sort of monster in which nationality seems to be swallowed up. Another portent usually appears at the same time. As Christian thought and teaching spread, many of the doctrines and practices of the old faith begin to look unreal and paltry. Hence the popular cry arises, 'Let us get rid of this intruder. We do not need it. We did very well without it.'

The Christian idea, that the individual should renounce his old national religion, is not an excrescence, but belongs to the very heart of Christ's system. The truth He teaches is for all men, and we cannot get the benefit of it except by complete submission to Him and faithful obedience to His laws. That His call, 'Follow me,' should lead to the surrender of the old religion on the part of the individual, and in the end to the death of the old religion, is in full accordance with the leading principles of His teaching.

Christ demands a serious change from every one who seeks to follow Him: 'Repent of your sins; lay aside your old life; deny yourself, surrender yourself to Me, and die to all your old passions and desires.' It is only through death that Christ promises life to us. The great statement,

If any man wish to come after me, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross, and follow me,¹

is immediately followed by the explanatory sentence

For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it.²

This is Christ's constant attitude to the individual: eternal life springs up through the death of the old self.

The same principle applies to each of the national religions as well. Each is prevented by its national character and

¹ Mark 8 34

² Mark 8, 35

organization from working out its own noblest thoughts practically and making them available for other nations. Each must therefore die before it can bear fruit in all the world and find its highest aspirations truly fulfilled. Just before the death of Christ a group of Greeks came to speak to Him in Jerusalem. It is a matter of the utmost interest and significance that when the representatives of Greek religion, philosophy, and art stood before Him, it was this great lesson of life through death that He sought to teach them. His words were:

The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die it abideth by itself alone, but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.¹

This law, which was about to be fulfilled in Himself, He pressed home upon the Greeks as necessary for them also, nor need we doubt that He saw clearly that the system under which the Greek people were living would have to die before it could become of the highest service to the whole world.

This principle received its highest illustration in Christ Himself. He gained His victory through death. His own resurrection and the birth of the Christian Church were both fruits of His death on the cross. It was Calvary that created Christianity. The living principle of the faith was expressed once for all in the self-devotion and death of our Lord. Like the grain of wheat He fell into the earth and died, in order to bear much fruit.

Thus when Jesus says, 'Follow me,' He means to say 'Follow me in the surrender of everything, follow me, if need be, even to the cross'. This dying to all that impedes the work of God in the soul includes for the Hindu a dying to Hinduism, which is no easy or pleasant duty.

In the philosophy and theistic theology of Hinduism there

are many precious truths enshined, but, as we shall see, the ancient Hindu system, within which they appeared, effectually prevents them from leavening the people. This hard, unyielding system must fall into the ground and die, before the aspirations and the dreams of Hindu thinkers and ascetics can be set free to grow in health and strength so as to bear fruit in the lives of Hindu villagers. Hinduism must die in order to live. It must die into Christianity.

D. How then does death issue in life?

By His life, death, and teaching Jesus founded a new religion. He thus takes His place, in one sense, beside other founders of religions. Yet the way in which He did it separates Him from all others. We shall understand best if we compare Him with the great Buddhist leader. Gautama cut himself adrift completely from Hinduism and denounced the Vedic sacrifices, the Vedas, and all the works of the Brāhmans. He made a clean sweep and a new beginning. Jesus, on the other hand, acknowledged that the faith of Israel was from God, yet declared that He had been sent to transform it into a new religion. This was possible, because He knew that God's method of revelation is not the presentation, once for all, of a complete system of truth expressed in a book from all eternity, but a gradual and historical process. The simple beginnings of the faith of Israel are laid before us in the Book of Genesis; they grow before our eyes in the narratives of the other books of Moses, and they find still richer development in the Prophets and the Psalms. But even in them God's will is not completely revealed. Hence, to Jesus, the religion of Israel was given by God, but not given in permanency. It was God's instrument for the training of Israel. He came to crown it by transforming it into the religion for all men, and to crown its knowledge of God by revealing Him as the Father of men.

The contrast between Christ and Buddha in this relation comes out most clearly when we compare the Buddhist books with the Bible. There is no hymn from the *Rigveda*, no

meditation from the *Āranyakas*, no glowing passage from the *Upanishads* in the Pāli *Tripitaka*; while the whole of the Jewish Scriptures reappear in the Bible as the Old Testament. Thus the principle of living growth, of progress and development, is set before us in visible form in the Christian Scriptures. The Old Testament is the bud, the New Testament is the flower.

But though the whole of the Jewish Scriptures are contained in the Christian Bible, they are not used by the Christian as they were used by the Jew. The whole of the Old Testament is retained, but it is read through Christ. For the Jew the whole is binding, for the Christian it is binding only in so far as it is in consonance with the Spirit of Christ. The Christian does not obey the Laws of Moses, though these are all contained in his sacred book. He does not offer animal sacrifice, nor abstain from the unclean foods of the law, nor circumcise his male children. The institutions of the old law were necessary for the childhood of the world. They are pictures, symbols, prophecies, but the reality is Christ. To the man who knows Christ these external rites are unnecessary. Yet the whole of the Old Testament is of very great value for the religious life; and a very large part of it is filled with the highest moral and spiritual truth and is accepted as such by the Christian, as it was accepted by Christ.

Christ regarded the Old Testament as pointing forward to Himself. Here is a most instructive scene, His first sermon in the synagogue of His own city Nazareth.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives

And recovering of sight to the blind,
 To set at liberty them that are bruised,
 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,
 And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat
 down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.
 And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been
 fulfilled in your ears.¹

In His coming, teaching, life, death, resurrection, person, the whole of the old religion is summed up, and makes a new beginning, no longer merely for Israel, but for the world. He is the Messiah of the prophets, He brings in the Kingdom of Heaven promised by them, and His teaching sums up the Law and the Prophets. In Him all the old lines meet, and again stretch out to all the world. He sums up His whole relationship to Israel in the words

I am come not to destroy, but to fulfil.²

The religions of Greece and Rome could not be the starting-point for the religion of the world, like the religion of Israel. Yet in them also much broken spiritual light was visible, and every type, symbol, and shadow found itself reproduced in spiritual reality in Christ. He did not destroy the old civilization, philosophy, literature, and art. Everything of value that the old world contained has been preserved and has flowered once more in Christianity. Our modern education, thought, science, and art rest on the ancient foundations. It is most significant that Greek philosophers at first regarded the crucified Jew with unspeakable disdain, but later realized that Greek philosophy was but a preparation for his teaching. Clement of Alexandria writes

Philosophy tutored the Greeks for Christ as the Law did the Hebrews.³

Thus it will be with India. Missionaries do not 'wish to destroy' Hindu 'society, history, and civilization', as Prof. Har Dayal imagines they do.⁴ The Muslim came, smash-

¹ Luke 4, 16-21

² *Stromata* 1:1:28

³ Matt 5, 17.

⁴ See p. 33 above.

ing temple and image, killing priest and scholar, confiscating temple and monastic lands. Christ comes, not to steal, and kill, and destroy; but to give life and to give it abundantly.¹ Under the spell of His influence modern India has already awaked to new and wondrous life. Here is the testimony of one who is not a Christian, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay and a Justice of the Bombay High Court:

The ideas that lie at the heart of the Gospel of Christ are slowly but surely permeating every part of Hindu society and modifying every phase of Hindu thought.²

Christ is already breathing life into the Hindu people. He does not come to destroy. To Him all that is great and good is dear, the noble art of India, the power and spirituality of its best literature, the beauty and simplicity of Hindu village life, the love and tenderness of the Hindu home, the devotion and endurance of the ascetic schools. Paul gave perfect expression to the Christian spirit in this regard.

Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.³

True, Christ passes everything through His refiner's fire, in order that the dross, which Hindus know so well, may pass away, but the gold will then shine all the brighter. What He cannot endure is that fine art and high literature and lofty philosophy should be used to enslave the poor of the people to superstition. All must be purged for their sakes. Hindus, like His own people, imagine Him a destroyer; but, when the period of pain and strife has passed, they too will see that He is not the Destroyer but the Restorer of the national heritage, and that all the gleams of light that make Hindu faith and

¹ John 11, 10.

² From an address delivered in the Y. M. C. A., Bombay, on June 14, 1910.

³ Phil 4, 8.

worship so fascinating to the student find in Him their explanation and consummation. It is one of the chief aims of this volume to show that Christianity is the Crown of Hinduism.

E. The Churches of the West and the missionaries they send must obey this spiritual law of seeking life through death.

1. In relation to those they seek to win to Christ. The missionary's life must be a daily death to self in every aspect of his behaviour; if he is to exercise his full influence for Christ. No words are sufficient to tell how meek and lowly in heart the winner of souls must be, what humility of speech, what quietness of manner, what superlative self-effacement are necessary, in order that the light of Christ may shine through him into Hindu eyes. The peculiar circumstances of India give three aspects of this duty special prominence.

There is, first, race feeling. The fact that India is under Britain complicates matters for the Christian rather seriously. The missionary is presumably quite incapable of the extreme intolerance not infrequently shown to Indians by individual Europeans, when the swaggering British private, the shop assistant, the mill mechanic, the army officer, and, occasionally, even the Indian civilian, display their common lack of breeding and of the imperial instinct. Yet there is extreme danger even for the missionary. He comes to the Indian because he believes him to be his brother, but the glories of his race and of its imperial position still live in his thought, and the simple fact that, for the present, a much larger percentage of effective men are found among Europeans than among Indians, is apt to assume exaggerated importance when one comes to practical work, so that the brotherhood which Christ teaches us tends to become qualified by other considerations. The danger is that these ideas will colour his behaviour, and that the Indian will be only too conscious that he is regarded as an inferior creature. We must therefore be most careful to treat every man with the supreme courtesy which Christ would show him lest we cause one of

these little ones to stumble. It is also right and wise to seek the closest social relations possible. Christ's example is here decisive. The extreme difficulties which Indian society presents should only stir the Christian to greater wisdom and inventiveness. In this as in other things love can see ways at first invisible. The missionary must also check the tendency, so noticeable in certain Indians, to become subservient to the European. Our noble King-Emperor has shown the right spirit. a Punjabi was about to prostrate himself at his feet, but the king caught him ere he fell. The Christian must refuse to allow the Oriental to do otherwise than play the man.

The sensitive Indian spirit is often repelled by our too self-conscious culture, by our society manner or university tone. For culture itself the Indian has unlimited respect, but the man who makes a shibboleth of the trifles of behaviour and the lady with a society sniff grate on his very soul, and make him shrink into his innermost reserve. There is surely no excuse for the man who follows Christ and studies St. Paul if he fail in this matter.

The rule for the behaviour of the monk, Buddhist as well as Hindu, which is dealt with below,¹ has given the Hindu a high ideal of how the religious teacher should live and act towards others. He readily grasps the point that Christ does not bid His followers live as monks, yet he expects them to show the meek, patient, unworldly temper demanded of the monk—no anger, no fuss, no overbearing words. Our Western temper, eager to act impatient of laziness, crookedness, scamped work, and fecklessness, is apt to rise in indignation in practical relations with Indians. The Hindu may not behave better himself, but he holds that the missionary has not behaved rightly; and Christ agrees with him.

2. The same law must rule our conduct in relation to Hinduism. There is so much that is immoral and cruel in the laws and practices of the religion that the first impulse

of the healthy Christian is to denounce these things in the frankest possible terms, as they are denounced by Hindus in the articles quoted above,¹ and it must be confessed that, at first sight, it seems as if such denunciation were fully justified from the practical standpoint of the welfare of the people of India. But there is a further fact which the practical missionary usually fails altogether to notice. No matter how gross, superstitious, cruel, or immoral a law or practice may be, there is always a glint of higher light upon it. This is shown at length in our last chapter. Even if it be a jewel in a swine's snout, it is there, and it is the secret of the reverence in which the rite or custom is held by the Hindu. Hence it is neither just nor wise to denounce the practice without reference to that which touches the sensitive Hindu spirit. Indeed the full scientific truth is not told unless both elements are recognized and the way in which the spiritual gleam comes to fall on the vicious act is set forth. Thus in dealing with every detail of Hinduism the utmost self-restraint is required. There must be a dying to self in this matter also. The writer here wishes to make public confession that during the first years of his life in India unguarded expressions fell from him in teaching, in public addresses, and in literature, of which he is now heartily ashamed.

Many a Hindu who is in the main friendly towards the practical work of missions and also towards the spread of the teaching of Christ in India complains that missionary literature very frequently judges Hinduism by the worst parts of Hindu practice, and sets forth, in contrast, the highest ideals of Christianity. It must be confessed that there is some truth in this serious charge, and the writer of this volume wishes to disassociate himself altogether from such writing. Christian criticism is unchristian unless it be impregnably just and truly Christlike in tone. Unsleeping watchfulness requires to be exercised in this regard. Strenuous efforts have been made

¹ See pp 36-42.

in the following chapters to be scrupulously fair, and to interpret Hindu teaching with as much imaginative sympathy as a Christian would wish a Hindu to bestow on the religion of Christ. Special care has been taken not to violate the great canon, that a religion must not be judged by the conduct of those who refuse to obey it. The crimes and immoralities of a country can be attributed to its religion only in so far as it commands or condones them. As the sexual vice of Europe exists in defiance of Christ, so much that is deplorable in Hindu life arises in flat disobedience to the precepts of Hinduism. Hence the only sane rule is to judge a religion by its principles, its laws, and its institutions, and not by the excesses of certain groups of the population.

3. There must be the same readiness to die to self in relation to certain aspects of our own Christianity. When we say that Christianity is the Crown of Hinduism, we do not mean Christianity as it is lived in any nation, nor Christianity as it is defined and elaborated in detail in the creed, preaching, ritual, liturgy, and discipline of any single church, but Christianity as it springs living and creative from Christ Himself. Christ is the head of the whole Church, not of any one denomination. Christ is human, not Western. Far less is He English, Scottish, American, or German.

Only in this way can we be true to Christ. For He set forth no detailed laws for the Church, for the moral life, or for the State. While Hinduism, Muhammadanism, and other religions have laid down detailed rules for human conduct in the matter of the family and other institutions, Christ deliberately refused to do so. In all these things He taught merely the spiritual principles which are necessary for our human life and left us to apply them in detail ourselves. The contrast between the Old and New Testaments in this regard is so striking as to leave no room for doubt. The Law of Moses differs very seriously in many ways from the Law of Manu, yet both bring every aspect of human life under religious law both nix p religious p o t cal moral and

sanitary regulations in a way that is most disconcerting to a modern mind, and both contain numerous rules for man's guidance in social matters. Thus, in their general form, the Hindu Law and the Jewish Law stand on a par. But there is no law in the New Testament. Jesus left no detailed social and religious regulations for His followers. Instead of a multitude of commands and prohibitions, He left them His own principles and the divine freedom of sons of God. In this way He gained two most valuable ends

First of all, His system is truly universal, applicable to all races of men, to all countries, and to all times, while every detailed system of laws, however wisely drawn up, necessarily becomes obsolete as civilization advances. Hindus are now beginning to discover that this is true with regard to all the social institutions of their religion, and they are casting about for wise means of reform. It is the same thing that is wrong with Muslim institutions, but very few Muslims have as yet realized the fact. They do not yet see that it is impossible to secure a healthy society and nation by applying the institutions of the Arabia of the seventh century to modern life. Such difficulties cannot arise where Christianity is understood, for Christ gave us principles which can be applied in innumerable forms to the detailed needs of men in all circumstances.

Secondly, the method of Christ gives each people freedom, allows them to build up the fabric of their social life according to their national genius. The systems remain Christian, so long as they are guided in every detail by the spiritual principles of Jesus. But that is not all. The complement to the freedom of the Church is the constant presence and activity of the Holy Spirit.

He will guide you into all truth¹

The Church, in freedom, faithfully seeking and following the guidance of the Spirit of Christ in applying the universal

truths taught by Jesus to the details of life, thought, and worship finds her way into health and righteousness.

The sheer originality of the method of Jesus in these matters is unparalleled. No other teacher approaches Him. Students will note how consistently He maintained this attitude in all circumstances. He remains the universal religious teacher, He refuses to become a mere legislator. In full conformity with this position. He also refused to act as judge. In the case of the man who asked Him to adjudicate in the matter of the family property between himself and his brother, He said,

Who made me a judge or a divider over you?¹

and in the painful case of the woman brought before Him for adultery He so acted that her accusers, accused by their own consciences, slunk away, and the woman found in Jesus not a judge to condemn her, but the Saviour of both her body and her soul.²

The New Testament itself presents us with a practical example of the out-working of these principles which may be of service to us. The original disciples of Christ were all Jews: but soon the Good News was told to Gentiles and many responded. The first impulse of the Christian leaders was to make these converts into Jews and to impose the whole Jewish law upon them. But some protested, and finally the whole Church was led, in part by Peter, but in the main by Paul, to see that Christ Himself was all-sufficient for them without the law.³ Hence the perfect freedom we have in Christ.

What was sufficient for the infant churches of Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy will assuredly prove sufficient for India, China, and Japan. We need not impose on them our elaborate theologies, our detailed canon law, or the particulars of our ritual, or the forms of our society. It is a hard

¹ Luke 12, 13, 14.

² Acts 15 - 31

³ John 8, 1-11.

task to distinguish in full wisdom the vital spirit from the phenomenal dress, but the will to die to all that is only our own will enable us to hear the voice of the Spirit of Jesus and to recognize what is merely racial, national, sectional, local, or temporary in our conception of Christ and His gospel. It is far easier to work this out in practice than in theory. Indeed it has been already done in many a community. Then, the more progress Christians make in co-operation, federation, and union, in conscious loyalty to Christ's principle of freedom,¹ on the one hand, and to His dying prayer for unity,² on the other, the more easy will it be to make this difficult yet altogether necessary distinction. Hence, in seeking to transfuse the life of Christ into the Hindu people, Christians must be constantly on their guard, laying aside all that is merely Western or temporary, and offering only the Bread of Life Himself.

F. We would invite the Hindu also to distinguish and discern. People sometimes write and speak as if it were the policy of missionaries to impose imperiously the whole of their own religious, civil, and social life unchanged upon the people of India. Such a policy would be downright tyranny, and if successful would be seriously subversive of national life. But such a thing is neither possible nor desirable. Serious Christians, above all, do not dream of doing such violence to the spirit of man. We are very fully conscious of the imperfections of the Christianity of England and of every other country of the West. We do not imagine that we or any other group of men have 'attained'; but we do hold most seriously that in Christ we have something which the nations need. The education and the science of England or of Germany are not perfect; yet India, China, and Japan are adopting Western education and Western science as fast as they possibly can. The Government of Britain is by no means perfect, yet every awakened nation of the East, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or Confucian, is panting after British freedom.

¹ Matt 17 24 6

² John 17 20-23

Spiritual religion can be absorbed without loss of nationality, as truly as these other activities of the human mind. If the intellectual life of the West is necessary for the welfare of the East much more are the principles of Christ necessary for the healing of the nations.

There can be no such thing as a national acceptance of Christ. He cannot be received by men *en masse*. Each soul must turn in its bare individual personality to find union with Him. The only cry possible is:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Hence, no existing nation is anything like fully Christian. A certain percentage of the population surrender to Him, others yield only a partial allegiance, and some even consciously oppose Him. The moral and spiritual standard which Christ lays upon the human soul is so high and so exacting that the worldly man rebels, and many seek to belong to Him and yet to escape the more serious aspects of His Lordship. Hence no Christian country fully represents Christ. His power must not be measured by any land. We make fullest confession of all the evils visible in the life of Christian countries in the West. Hindus often write and speak of these things, but they are far more painfully present to the Christian mind. Yet these things do not prove that Christ has failed.

The example of Israel is sufficient to prove that a nation may possess truth of the highest value to all the world, and yet a large part of the people may fail to use it in their lives. The Old Testament is the record of the supreme religious revelation of the ancient world, yet the disobedience of the bulk of the people is the most constant feature of their history. On the other hand, the core of the nation was true to Jahveh; and in them, above all, but also in the whole people, the wonderful work of God is manifest. So in the West. Despite our pitiable failure, there is abundance in our life to show the supremacy of Christ. The West surpasses all the world in

practical philanthropy, in eager endeavours to serve men, in the uprightness and purity of its government, and in general efficiency. This last quality which the East longs so vehemently to possess is largely the result of two Christian forces, the position of woman in the family and society, and the general purity of public administration, both of which spring from the depth and clearness of Christ's ethic. The mere fact that all the nations of the East now wish to copy the West is proof of the mighty dynamic at work there. But the thoughtful man will test Christ not by the Western world as a whole but by its Christian core, and there he will recognize the constant presence of a high and great type of character, distinguished chiefly by heroic service of mankind and by the full reconciliation of the highest culture the world knows with full faith in Christ.

But there is another point to be noticed. However faithful any single country might be to Christ, it could not interpret Him fully. He is human, and the riches that are in Him can be set forth only by the united efforts of the whole human family. There are many elements in His life and teaching which are acknowledged by the Church, yet have never been fully worked out in thought or in life:

We are but broken lights of Thee.

But a new age is dawning. We see Jesus already crowned with many crowns, but we do not yet see all things put under Him. But in this new age on which we have entered His Kingdom will continue to extend rapidly, until

All kings shall fall down before him
All nations shall serve him¹

Then much that is now but promise will find concrete exposition and embodiment, and the glory and universality of our Lord will be placed beyond cavil. How much will be possible, when the whole world acknowledges, even with meagre intelli-

gence, the Lordship of Christ? How many reforms will inevitably come? How much uplifting of the fallen, whether individuals or peoples? How many forms of change will then come within the range of possibility?

Then will the wonderful religious genius of India reveal its power anew in its interpretation of Christ. Aspects of His example and of His message which are latent in the West will in India find free and full expression. May not Christ's attitude to poverty find glorious illumination, His deep sense of the meaning and the sacredness of society be exhibited to the world by a people set free from Caste indeed, yet reaping its fruits as never before, and the prayer and communion with His Father to which Jesus so often gave His nights be turned to priceless account by the descendants of the rishis and yogis? Aspects of Christ which the hard practical West has failed to utilize will prove fruitful beyond our dreams in the Christian experience of the richly dowered Hindu race.

Hence, in this volume, in setting forth Christianity as the Crown of Hinduism, we shall restrict ourselves to Christ Himself, drawing our evidence only from His own life and teaching, and from those parts of the Old Testament which He accepted without alteration. If we use a sentence here and there from the Apostles, we do so only to further illustrate the meaning of Christ.

* * * *

It has been rather difficult to decide in what order the various aspects of Hinduism ought to be reviewed, for each has influenced the others in turn. But, since karma is the one principle which has leavened every part of the religion, it necessarily had to be dealt with early. On the other hand, it is clear that the chief religious ideas behind the Hindu family took form before the rise of the karma theory; and, in the main, they have continued to act as if there were no such doctrine. Hence the family is taken first and karma next. There is one other fragment of the religion which has

come very little under the influence of karma, namely the life of the *vānaprastha*, but, as that is bound by so many ties to the life of the *sannyāsī*, it seemed better to take them together and simply to point out the historical circumstances in which the rule arose¹. The reasons for the order of the other chapters lie on the surface.

¹ See below, pp. 249-253.

CHAPTER I

THE INDO-ĀRYAN FAITH

I IN the darkling cave of prehistoric time we are beginning to make out faintly the outlines of the religion by which the parent Aryan people lived before they spread abroad and gave birth to many nations. Their original divinities were a vast number of petty spirits, each supposed to have only a single function; but they learned rather later to revere a number of the greater phenomena of nature. They worshipped these heavenly powers by means of sacrifice and prayer and with the aid of priests. They also laid great stress on the worship of their ancestors, and this ritual formed the foundation on which all the institutions of the Aryan family were built.¹

II One of the great swarms that hived off from the central body found its way into the lands to the south of the Oxus, and gradually took possession of the country to the west, east, and south. This people may be designated Indo-Iranian at this stage, for, in the course of their slow expansion, they gradually became divided in two, the eastern half entering India and creating its civilization, the western populating Iran, and giving birth to Zoroastrianism and the ancient Persian Empire. By inference from the *Vedas*, on the one hand, and from the *Avesta* and other Zoroastrian documents, on the other, we are able to realize in outline what the religion of this prehistoric people was like.

Clearly considerable advance had been made in conceiving the heavenly gods; for there is now quite a group of person-

¹ Art. Aryan Religion E I E

lized divinities with definite names and lofty functions. It seems clear that the following at least were fully recognized Varuna, Mitra, Aiyaman, Bhaga, and Indra, and along with them Yama and Soma. Theology had made a good deal of progress, for the gods are thought of as spiritual beings, and the natural phenomena from which they originally sprang are now but the medium of their manifestation.

The sacrifice, meanwhile, had been greatly elaborated. A ritual had been established, and hymns as well as prayers accompanied the stated acts. The home of the gods being now believed to be in heaven, it was the common practice to send the sacrifice to them on the flames and smoke of the altar fire. The drink of the gods offered in sacrifice was the juice of a plant called *soma* in Sanskrit, *haoma* in Zend, the language of the *Avesta*. A special ritual for the offering of this divine drink had appeared and the drink itself had undergone apotheosis. *Soma* was already a god. The priests, too, had far fuller functions than before and were called by special names.

The belief about the dead had also made considerable progress. Burning had almost universally taken the place of burying, probably from a wish to release the soul as completely as possible from the body and to bear it away on the flame of the pyre to the heavenly regions. When men die, they are believed to go to heaven, where they join the company of glorified ancestors and enjoy immortality with the gods. They are invited to the sacrifice in the same way as the gods. They are believed to be very powerful.

But the most interesting fact about Indo-Iranian days is that there was a movement which, had it not been checked, might have culminated in an ethical theism; and it is clear that ideas of considerable worth were pressed forward in the reformation. The god who held the supreme place was Varuna. Scholars now agree that Asura Varuna of the *Rigveda* is Ahura Mazda of the *Avesta*. Varuna is called *kshāritasya* in the *Rigveda* while Ahura Mazda is called *ashahē*

Phao in the *Avesta*. These are merely dialectic forms of the same phrase, signifying 'source of divine law'. This noble conception of supreme law, Sanskrit *rita*, Zend *asha*, covers the unchanging order of nature as well as the moral law. It is clear, however, that the reform had not been carried through when the moment of unconscious separation arrived.¹

III If our knowledge of the primeval Aryans, and even of the Indo-Iranians, is a matter of rather hazy inference, the life which the Indo-Aryans lived in the morning of history stands out before us in the *Rigveda* clearly defined and most beautiful, like the snows of the Himalayas in the sparkle of dawn. Since the *Rik* became known to Europe, innumerable scholars have made it the centre of their researches; so that the religion represented in it is now well understood, and its beliefs and its practices have been carefully analysed and brought into relationship with similar phenomena elsewhere.²

Their home was at first the Western Panjab and certain districts of Afghanistan beyond the Indus, but they gradually spread eastward, subduing or displacing the aboriginal tribes, and thus steadily adding to the territory under them. They were a simple people, organized in tribes, each ruled by its own chieftain. They lived in villages, getting their livelihood by cattle-feeding and tillage, and therefore were dependent upon sunshine and soil, rain and river, for their wealth. Yet they were as well used to the sword as the plough, and were always ready to fight the dark barbarians around them or to dispute a piece of territory with a neighbouring Aryan tribe. They knew but few of the arts, they had no writing and no coinage. They ate beef and drank intoxicating drink.

The father, as in the early Aryan age, had the ancestral rites in his hands, and, in consequence, had all the authority of the family in his power. Marriage was universal, and parents prayed for sons to take over the rites from the father. Girl

¹ Most of the details are from Bloomfield's *Preligion of the Veda*.

² Mac gives a good s of what is known.

children were sometimes exposed as in earlier days. But although the patriarchal system placed great power in the hands of the father, it had not yet developed its evil tendencies. Women had a great deal of liberty. Young men and maidens formed acquaintances at festal and other gatherings, and marriages were usually arranged according to their wishes. There was no child-marriage and no life of seclusion behind the puidah. A widow was not expected to burn herself on her husband's pyre, and there was no rule forbidding her to remarry. Polygamy was known, but was little practised.

There was no caste, although the three classes—warriors, priests, farmers—which at a later date became the three twice-born castes, can already be traced among them.

Strangely enough, not one scrap of anything material that can be with certainty ascribed to this age has ever been found. Even pottery seems to fail, probably because of the semi-migratory life they were still living. Had it not been for their religion, we should be absolutely without direct evidence about this most interesting and gifted people. But, thanks to that, there remains to us to-day the most stately and most significant memorial that exists of any early people.

The *Rigveda* is a work of surpassing interest. While in the strict sense it is not true to say that the religion and the civilization which gave birth to the hymns are primitive, it is true that no other people has bequeathed to us a body of lofty literature representing such an early stage in the development of civilization. Clearly the people who created the *Rik* were a race of remarkable gifts. The high qualities which produced these hymns are as conspicuously revealed to us in the character of their language. While ancient Sanskrit is one of the great group of Aryan languages, all of which show many common features, yet it is the only member of the family which has preserved its words in such form as to make their origin quite plain to the philologist. The linguistic consciousness of the people who developed Sanskrit must have been delicate and analytic far above the average. The religious

conquest of the whole Indian Peninsula by the Brāhmar̥iṇ race, and the remarkable qualities of the philosophy, and the literature which they produced, are sufficient titles to a very high place in the aristocracy of humanity.

The heavenly gods whose rise we noted in the Aryan period have now reached the summit of their glory, and have either eclipsed all others or drawn them into the shining circle of the Celestials. The Indo-Aryan gods are all *devas*. What gives them their unrivalled splendour and interest is the fact that they are still identified with the most glorious natural phenomena, the all-encompassing Sky, the flashing Sun, the Thundercloud, gigantic, omnipotent, the Dawn divinely beautiful, the roaring Storm; so that no such thing as temple or image is ever dreamt of; yet they are so far personalized that they not only receive sacrifice and listen to prayer and hymn, but have their own high home of unapproachable light beyond sun and stars, where they live in immortal joy.

The greatest of all the gods, Indra, the Thunderer, whose primal function is to bring rain to the parched fields, goes out armed with thunderbolts, flanked by wild winds, *Maruts*, and smites *Ahi*, the demon Restrainer, who would keep the living waters from the dying land. The fighting Thunderer naturally became War-god and Leader to the forward-marching, conquering Aryans. Whence the transition to Sustainer, Creator, and omnipotent Lord was not difficult. *Agni*, Fire, the high priest of gods and men, holds the second place. Along with him comes *Soma*, originally the intoxicating juice of a plant, drink divine for both men and gods, now a great god, to whom sacrifice and song are offered. *Sūrya*, *Vishṇu*, *Savitār*, *Pūshan*, are different forms of the Sun; *Ushas* is the Dawn, and the *Asvins*, sons of the Mare, are the Dioskouroi, swift light-bearers of the morning sky. They had added functions as Healers and Helpers in distress. *Rudra*, the Roarer, is a storm god, *Vāyu*, the wind; *Dyaus* Heaven and *Prithivī* the Earth. but these two ancient divinities have fallen far into the background. *Yama* is honoured as a god but is

described as the first man, and as having discovered the path by which the righteous dead go to heaven to join the company of their ancestors and the gods.

But by far the most interesting group are the *Ādityas*, the seven sons of the great mother *Aditi*, Eternity. The seven names are not all given. We hear only of *Varuna*, *Mitra*, *Aryaman* and *Bhaga*. These are the highest of all the gods. *Varuna* and *Mitra* especially are conceived as powers behind the other gods, rulers who have marked out the path for other gods to tread. The origin of this group of divinities is still wrapped in obscurity.

The figure of *Varuna* is by far the noblest in the *Rigveda*. He was the centre of the theistic movement of the Indo-Iranian age, as we have already seen.¹ In the *Rik* he represents all the loftiest thoughts connected with the *Ādityas*. He stands out in a lonely grandeur which, to us, has in it something of solemn sadness, for the group of noble conceptions with which he is connected is the one segment of Rigvedic theology which is not carried forward and used in the great culmination of Indian thought which characterizes the next age.

His name suggests that he was originally 'the encompassing heaven', but he scarcely appears in the hymns in that character at all. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, the omniscient Ruler who watches the whole universe with all-seeing, unsleeping eyes, the compassionate Protector and Helper, the Holy One, from whom Law and Right (*ṛita*) proceed, who blesses the righteous sternly punishes the sinner, pardons the penitent, and confers immortality on the faithful dead. Serious sickness and sudden danger seem to have been usually interpreted as the outcome of *Varuna*'s anger over a breach of his laws. There are quite a number of hymns in which the singer prays to him for pardon and release from punishment. The petition usually runs, 'Whether

we have sinned consciously or unconsciously,' or 'Whichever of thy laws, known or unknown, we have broken'. There is more ethical feeling in the hymns addressed to Varuna than in any other group. He is the only god of the *Rik* who is consistently holy.

But this gracious, righteous, omniscient Lord is already fading into the background in the *Rigveda*. India, the bold warrior, stands out as the national god. For him the greatest sacrifices are held; for him the singer makes his hymn. To Varuna no great hymn occurs among the latest hymns of the *Rigveda*. The lofty ethical god has passed out of sight. Henceforth he is only a minor divinity, the god of the waters. Along with Varuna there also disappeared the splendid conception of *rita*, divine law. The magnificent ethical promise of this early idea was never fulfilled. India lost it, along with Varuna, the fount of righteousness, and never clearly rose out of the common ancient point of view, that the gods are above morality.

Though the Aryans of the time of the *Rik* were polytheists, yet they were far enough advanced in thought and religious feeling to be frequently led by their higher instincts to ideas and expressions which are scarcely consistent with a belief in many gods. We have already seen that India is revered as the Creator, the Sustainer, the omnipotent Lord, and that Varuna also receives all these epithets and is recognized as the source of Law besides. The worshipper is frequently carried forward, in the fervour of his feeling for the god who is the object of his adoration at the moment, to think of him as supreme, as the only possible object of adoration. The right way to interpret these facts is to say that the only really rational form of religion is the worship of one God, sole and supreme; that early men very seldom, if ever, reached the full perception of that truth; but that the more open they were in mind, and the more reverent and moral they were in life, the more were they unconsciously drawn towards belief in one God only. The *Rik* is polytheistic, but contains

numerous phrases which show in what direction the minds of the worshippers were tending.

The worship of the *Rigveda* is summed up in the sacrifice. The priests, the householder, and his family gathered in the open air where preparations had been made. The altars were shallow trenches cut according to rule and filled with sacrificial grass. Close by were the three sacred fires, and the sacrificial posts to which the victims were tied. The priests pressed the soma, and set it out in cups. They killed the animals, poured offerings of butter, milk, and grain on the fires, and laid out food on the grass-covered altars. All the while they recited, chanted, or muttered portions of the hymns, inviting the gods to the sacrifice and asking for their favour and help. The extreme care was taken that no slip should occur either in the ritual or the liturgy.

The worship is distinctly ignoble. It is frankly a method of bargaining with the gods and persuading them to give the sacrificer and the priest the large material and earthly boons which they desire. The beauty and dignity of the hymns are means towards this end. There is little real religious feeling manifested in the whole elaborate cult.

The worship of ancestors, now known as 'the fathers', stands out in great clearness in the hymns. Burial has not altogether passed out of use, but cremation is the regular method of disposal of the dead. The hymn sung at the funeral bids the soul go without fear and follow Yama, who has found the path to the home of the righteous 'fathers' in heaven, where he will enjoy a blessed immortality, in the company of those of his loved ones who have gone before him. Then a funeral feast is held, and annually afterwards it is repeated. 'Then with Yama and Agni all the "fathers" who are known and who are not known are summoned to the funeral feast, to the food on the sacrificial straw and to the prized soma.' The 'fathers' have their home in heaven, but they move freely through the wide spaces of the air bringing blessings to their posterity and helping them in all trouble.

They are righteous, and eagerly distinguish between those who do right and those who do wrong. It is most noteworthy that in those days men were believed to die but once, and thereafter to enjoy immortality. No thought at all resembling transmigration occurs in the hymns.

Indeed rebirth was too gloomy a thought for those days of sunshine. The whole outlook of the people was bright. The world was no illusion to them, and life was good. They prayed that they might live a hundred years; and they looked forward to meeting their loved ones and enjoying unending happiness with them in heaven. It is also rather remarkable that there is no sign of asceticism among them. Austerity, *tapas*, occurs in some of the later hymns, but there is no ascetic idea connected with it. It is simply a method parallel with sacrifice, of getting what one wishes.

There is another element in the *Rik* which must not be neglected. The beginnings of religious philosophy appear in some of the later hymns. There is no system taught. Rather is the material in the form of hard questions and mystic suggestions. But already one of the characteristic ideas of Hindu philosophy finds expression, the One behind the many gods, he who is the unseen source and supporter of all that is.

It seems to be clear, however, that the *Rigveda* does not give us a complete picture of the religious life of the time. Except in the matter of ancestor-worship, the domestic and the private observances are scarcely represented in the hymns. Simple domestic rites there must have been which developed later into the sacraments described in the legal literature. We have also the evidence of the *Atharvaveda* to prove that the people were accustomed to use magic rites and spells to save themselves from dangers and enemies of many kinds, and to bring evil upon those whom they hated. Such practices date from the early Aryan period and have survived in India until our own day. The *Atharvan* was compiled at a later date than the *Rik* but many of its hymns and incantations

belong to the same period as the sacrificial hymns, so that its evidence is of undeniable value.

The priests were already very powerful. The greatest of all was the Chief's chaplain, the *purohita* but all were revered for their sacred knowledge and skill, and for the power they wielded over the gods. Already they were divided by function into three groups, the *hotris* or reciters, the *udgātris* or chanters, the *adhvaryus* or sacrificers. There were six priestly families of great celebrity and capacity, each of which treasured a group of hymns which had been produced by its members, and which were believed to be of priceless worth for their influence over the gods. Towards the end of the period we find evidence of the existence of schools in which young priests were trained. The education was necessarily oral, and the one subject of study was the hymns used at the sacrifices. It seems likely that it was in the six great families that these schools first arose, and that the head of one of them succeeded in learning the hymns belonging to the other five, and was thus able to teach six distinct sets of hymns to his pupils. In this way we account for the bringing together of the six groups of hymns, each attributed to one of the great families, which now form Books II and VII of the *Rigveda*, and which are recognized by all scholars as being the nucleus of the whole. At later dates other groups were added, until the contents of the ten books as we have them were gathered into a single collection.

IV The religion of the *Rigveda* is held by no Hindu now. It was transformed, in the course of the subjugation of India, into a very different religion. How this great change came to take place, and what the forces were which produced it, will appear in the following chapters.

Hindus often speak in high praise of the religion of the *Rigveda*, and there is abundance of justification for their so doing. Perhaps they scarcely realize, however, that this early faith stands much nearer to Christianity than it does to Hinduism. A transition from the religion of the *R* to

Christianity would be much simpler and more natural than a transition to Hinduism. How easy it is to step from a simple, external, sacrificial polytheism, such as we are dealing with here, to Christianity, is proved by numerous examples. Those who have leaned on animal sacrifice turn with deep religious joy to the perfect moral sacrifice of the death of Christ, once the thirst for a spiritual faith has made itself felt. We have seen how for a time men prayed to Varuna, the righteous and omnipotent Lord, the source of *rita*, i. e. Law both natural and moral, who punished the guilty and forgave the penitent. This beautiful but short-lived faith finds full justification for itself in the Heavenly Father, whose nature is love and holiness, whose will is expressed in the regularity and impartiality of nature as well as in the moral law, who gave up His only Son to death, that we might have forgiveness. Further, Christ's doctrine, that those who know the Heavenly Father on earth will spend eternity in close personal fellowship with Him in heaven, is the direct spiritual culmination of the Vedic faith in one life and one death, followed by an immortality of happiness, while transmigration and *karma* is an altogether alien conception. Finally, think of the bright, hopeful outlook, the joyful acceptance of the world as good, and the healthy social and family freedom which the Indo-Aryans enjoyed—no caste, no child-marriage, no child-widows, no enforced widowhood, no *sati* and no *zenāna*. How near all this is to the spirit of Christianity!

The members of the Ārya Samāj revere the *Rik* and the other three Vedas as the only true Revelation, on the ground that they are 'God's knowledge' (*Veda* is the Sanskrit word for knowledge). They contend that, being God's knowledge, the four Vedas contain all the truths of religion, and also all natural science. The truths of religion which they find there are the doctrines taught by the Samāj, notably, that there is one personal God and no other, that transmigration and *karma* are the laws that govern human life, and that forgiveness of offences is for ever impossible. They deny the existence of

polytheism in the Vedas and stoutly maintain that they teach monotheism and transmigration. They as confidently affirm that every truth already discovered by Western science occurs, at least in germ, in the fourfold canon. These are most astounding contentions; for the *Sāman*, *Yajus*, and *Atharvan* exhibit the same polytheism, and the same doctrine of life and death, that we have found in our study of the *Rigveda*, and there is no more natural science in them than there is in the Homeric poems.

The maintenance of a living connexion with the past is not merely a healthy, but a necessary, element of modern religion; so that it was a sound instinct which led the founder of the Ārya Samāj to seek to link his faith to the Vedas, but to attempt to establish a connexion by means of assertions which scholarship is compelled to repudiate, is to build upon a quicksand. The position of the Ārya Samāj is absolutely indefensible.

How then can a modern religion be related to an early faith? We need not pretend that our thoughts and knowledge are the same as those of the naive minds of primitive ages. We are bound to acknowledge frankly the vast differences which sever the old from the new. But if the beliefs we now hold are the true spiritual successors of the simple ideas found in the primitive religion, then we may well claim that to us has descended the heritage of the early faith. In this sense, then, the religion of Christ is the spiritual crown of the religion of the *Rigveda*.

CHAPTER II

THE HINDU FAMILY

I. ALMOST all primitive peoples hold that the human soul is distinct from the body and separable from it. Along with this there usually goes the belief that the soul survives death and lives a new life apart from the body, either in close proximity to its old haunts, or in some other place. But early man, not having been able to reach the idea of spirit as distinct from material substance, conceives the soul as a material thing, and believes that after death it is dependent for its continued existence on food and drink precisely like a living man. In consequence of this, nearly all primitive races have been accustomed to provide food and drink for the departed souls of members of their own families. The food is laid out as for a feast, and the souls of the dead are invited to come and eat and be nourished thereby. These ideas are the origin of all feasts for the dead. The observances have taken many forms in different times and places. Some people feed the dead daily, others monthly, or annually, and there are many modes of preparing the food for them. We must note carefully that this practice, which is all but universal among the simpler peoples, is a service of souls and not a worship. The dead are dependent on the family for their nourishment. The belief usually is that, if they do not receive this attention, they become wandering and harmful ghosts.

But these beliefs have passed among many peoples into a more developed stage, where the dead are conceived as being powerful beings controlling the welfare of the family.

When this idea arises, the old service of the dead becomes a worship. The family pays them great reverence, not merely because they are relatives, but in order to secure their loving care over the family. Ancestor-worship, though not so common as ancestor-service, is yet a very widely prevalent cult. It has been found in many parts of the world and in many forms, but appears most distinctly in the various peoples of the Mongolian race and the nations that form the great Aryan group. Seenningly, ancestor-worship had been developed by the original Aryan race before it split up into many groups, for traces of it are found among every Aryan people. The general features of the worship are the same in all branches of the race, but the details vary considerably. The dead are everywhere distinguished from the gods, and yet they are conceived as their companions, and their worship is very similar to the worship of the gods. They are believed to possess great power and to bring blessing to their righteous descendants.

Now consider the way in which this worship modified the organization of the family. The father was the family priest, and controlled the worship of the ancestors of the family in all details. He alone knew the peculiar ritual which was traditional in his family, and which had to be maintained unchanged, if the favour of the dead was to be retained. He alone had the power of passing on the rites to his son. As the high priest of the ancestral rites, he was the acknowledged head of the family. The reverence and the power which his priestly position brought him made him supreme in the home. In this way the patriarchal family took shape. In earlier times there was a looser organization, or the mother might be the head of the family; but with the establishment of ancestor-worship the father became supreme. He had full power over his wife and his young children, and in most nations his grown-up sons also were completely under his authority. The property of the family was altogether in his hands. This is the source of the *patria potestas* of Rome

and of the prominent place held by the father in Greece, Persia, India and among Teutonic and Slavonic peoples as well. This type of family is called patriarchal because the father has so much power.

There can be no doubt that the family reached its strong position in ancient society through the power vested in the father, and that the worship of ancestors, through its influence on the family, produced moral results of very great value. The sacred rites, binding together the living and the dead, led the members of the family to think more of their unity. They became conscious of the family as an organism, part of which had already passed into the other world and part of which was not yet born. They thought of it as a living, constantly growing unity, and the thought filled them with deep reverence and pride. To act worthily of the family, to bring no disgrace upon one's ancestors, to do everything to build up and strengthen the heritage of the family became a motive of superlative strength. Since ancestors were conceived as displeased, or even injured, by an act that injured the family, the motives for right behaviour were greatly strengthened. Marriage became more sacred than it had ever been thought of before; for the welfare of all the members depended upon the family being kept pure. The chastity of the mother thus became a matter of the greatest possible importance. The position of the father drew great reverence to him, and both son and father were thereby led to think, feel, and act more worthily towards each other. From ancestor-worship also arose the sacredness of the hearth. For, since the ancestral protectors were honoured at the hearth, the wedding ceremony and other domestic rites were celebrated there too. All the holiest and most touching scenes in the life of the family were connected with it. It was the focus of the joys and sorrows of the home.

The importance of carrying on the rites was so great that it was conceived to be the duty of every man to marry, in order that he might have a son to follow him in his

piety-work. Marriage, therefore, became universal wherever ancestor-worship prevailed. As only a son could take over the rites from a dying man, the birth of a boy was most ardently desired, and if marriage failed to provide a son, it was a man's duty to have recourse to adoption. In all the ancient Aryan nations, the adopted son held completely the position of a real son.

Only those who were allowed to share in the family worship and to taste the food offered to the ancestors were recognized as belonging to the family. If, for any reason, a man was interdicted from the feast in honour of the dead, he was counted an outcast. Only those who shared in the worship of the ancestors of the family could share in the division of property on the death of the head of the house.

It is thus clear that ancestor-worship, through its creation of the patriarchal family, has done civilization a very large service. That stage in the evolution of the family produced changes of extreme value.

We must acknowledge, however, on the other hand, that the system has two inherent weaknesses, which in certain parts of the world have led to serious results. Races have varied greatly in the completeness with which they have developed the patriarchal family. In some places it remained rudimentary; in others it was developed to its utmost implications. (1) Wherever the father's power grew so large that all his male descendants of whatever age were completely under his authority, there, necessarily, the family bulked large in the minds of men and the individual became weak. (2) Another result of the father's power has been the depreciation of the value and the capacity of women. As we have already seen, the patriarchal family naturally created a desire for sons. Man was exalted and woman was regarded as very inferior. When a daughter was born, she received a very poor welcome. She brought no strength to the family, at best she would by marriage pass out of her father's family into another. Consequently female infanticide was found

everywhere in the ancient world alongside of the patriarchal family. The wife also tended to have no rights as against the husband; but the variation in different races on this matter was very great.¹

II We may now leave the general question and turn to the ancestors of the Hindus.

A Amongst the Indo-Aryans in the Panjab, as we find from the *Rigveda* the blessed dead were spoken of as the 'fathers' (*pitris*). They were believed to move through the earth's atmosphere, bringing gifts to those who sacrificed to them, rewarding the good, punishing the evil. Their descendants honoured them at the funeral feast: they were invited to come and eat the food laid out on the sacrificial straw, and to drink the *soma* prepared for them. Thus, ancestor-worship was fully organized amongst the Indo-Aryans, as amongst the other Aryan peoples, and the family was patriarchal in its organization. The system, however, was not yet far developed. The state of affairs was very similar to what we find in early Greece. Female children were exposed, but women still held a good position.

When the Brāhmans succeeded in winning for themselves an authoritative religious position, and when the conquest of North India was begun in real earnest, the whole religion of the Aryan people began to change. The worship became much more elaborate, and stringent rules were laid down for every detail of every sacrifice. This applies to the worship of the *pitris* as well as the worship of the gods. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* contains a chapter² which ordains that the pious man shall worship the *pitris* every month, and gives detailed rules for the observance. Here for the first time we meet with the *pinda*, the word used throughout the history of Hinduism for the cake or ball of rice offered to ancestors. It is well worthy of remark that in this passage there occurs several times the phrase, 'The Fathers have passed away

¹ Art. 'Ancestor-worship'. *E. R. E.* and Bosanquet *The Family*

² I L

once for all transmigration has not appeared as yet. Another noteworthy matter is this, that the help of a Brāhman is already required for this monthly worship of the Fathers. Even at this early date the priestly caste had begun to usurp the father's rights in the religion of the family. A Brāhman's help is required to-day in all the *Śrāddha* ceremonies, i. e. the worship of ancestors. A similar, but later account occurs in the *Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra*¹. In both these books the old idea that the 'fathers' come and eat the sacrificial food remains unchanged. The blessed dead are conceived as requiring ordinary food and drink and as dependent upon their descendants for it.

A little later, as we find from the Upanishads, the theory of transmigration arose among the ancient Hindus. This is a totally new conception of man's destiny after death, for the belief is that a man is born and dies many times. It is therefore impossible for a man after death to join permanently the ranks of the blessed dead, as the conception is in the earlier literature. Even if after death he goes to heaven, his stay there is necessarily limited, for he must return to earth to be born again. Thus the new idea was quite inconsistent with the basis of the worship of the *pitris*. Yet the practice went on without a break, and with little change.

The worship has continued among Hindus down to the present day. There has been little essential alteration in the ceremonial, but one very important change has arisen in the conception. Originally there was no idea of the spirituality of the soul. Since that conception laid hold of the Hindu mind, a new theory about the use of the *pinḍa* has been formed. The idea is that each soul at death carries with it into the other world a subtle body, but that a gross body is also required, which can be got only through the *pinḍas* offered by the surviving relatives. When a Hindu dies, his body is burned. At the burning, and during the next nine days, funeral rites are performed for him, his son taking

a prominent place in the ceremonial. The essential point in the ritual of each of these days is the offering of a *pinda*, that is a ball of kneaded flour, with water, milk, rice, honey, &c., to the spirit of the dead man. The belief is that the spirit remains a *preta* (i.e. a wandering ghost), unless it receives this food. But the soul that receives the *pinda* daily during these ten days gradually develops for itself a gross body. It is thus transformed into a *pitri*, and is received into the company of glorified ancestors in heaven. On the eleventh day after the man's death the first *śrāddha* (literally 'act of faith') is held, and this has to be repeated monthly during the first year and once a year afterwards. Although the ceremony is carried out primarily for one person, yet a large group of other ancestors are also benefited by this and by all other *śrāddha* ceremonies. The food offered to the *pitris* is again in the form of a *pinda*. Libations of water, called *tarpaṇa*, also are poured out for the refreshment of the *pitris* at these services. The person holding the service has to invite to it all his relatives on both his father's and his mother's side, for three generations upward and three generations downward. These relatives are called his *sapindas* as sharing the *pinda*-ceremony with him. This group of people is of considerable importance in family matters. The offering of water to the 'fathers' is also a part of the stated daily prayers.

According to Hindu thought the *śrāddha* ceremonies are not merely acts of loving remembrance, but are absolutely necessary for the welfare of those who have gone to the other world. The offering of the *pinda* at the funeral ceremony is needed to transform the soul of the departed into a blessed spirit, and all *śrāddhas* thereafter performed are required to enable him to retain his position in heaven. Then, in turn, the welfare of the family is dependent on the welfare of the ancestors. If the ancestors fall from heaven to hell, the whole family will be destroyed. Here is a couplet from the *Gītā*, than which there is no better authority:

* Confounding of castes brings to hell alike the stock's slayers and the stock, for then Fathers fall when the offerings of the cake and water to them fail¹

What an influence such a belief as this was bound to exercise! To the ancient Greek or Roman burial was an absolute necessity, the ghost of the unburied man flitted about in utter misery until some pious soul flung a handful of dust on the uncovered body. To the Hindu, the offering of the ball of rice and of the water is similarly of the last importance. To omit the rite is not merely to show disrespect to the dead, but to deprive him of the peace and blessedness of heaven; and then, in turn, the man who is guilty of the neglect is doomed to hell, and his family to utter destruction.

B It is from ancestor-worship that the chief principles of the Hindu family have arisen

1. The first of these is that every man must marry and beget a son. If he fails to do this, he fails in his duty to his ancestors.² Their welfare in the other world depends upon his having a son to take over from himself the *śrādhha* ceremonies. No poem is so much read in Hindu homes as the *Mahābhārata*. One of the earliest stories in that great repository tells how the ascetic Janatkāru wandered about, refusing to marry, until one day he came upon his ancestors suspended head downwards over a hole by a rope which was being gnawed by mice. He asked the reason and was told it was because he had no son. In consequence, he went off at once to look for a wife. Thus, to the Hindu, marriage is a religious duty, not merely a comfort or a convenience. On the other hand, the birth of a son brings great blessings to his parents.³

We had better notice here a very healthy rule which arose

¹ Barnett's translation is usually quoted, as here

² The debt which a man owes to his ancestors is an idea that occurs very frequently in Hindu literature. The debt is paid by begetting a son. *Vasishtha*, xi. 48, xvi. 1, *Baudhāyana*, II vi. 11. 33, *Manu*, ix. 106

³ *Āśvāyana* G S I vi. 1-4 *Apurvaśruti* II xxiv. 3. *Baudhāyana* II ix. 6 o

among the three highest castes probably in the seventh century B.C. Away in that early time it became customary to send every Brāhman, Kshatriya, and Vaiśya¹ boy to a Brāhmanical school to receive a religious education. He underwent the ceremony of initiation (doubtless a primæval puberty ceremony), received the sacred thread and immediately went to school, where he spent several strenuous years. Every student had to live a chaste life during his education. When that was ended, he returned home, and a ceremony, the home-coming (*samāvartana*), was performed. Then the young man could marry, but not till then. Most young men would be twenty to twenty-four years of age. Clearly the leaders in those days were deeply impressed with the necessity of preparing a man carefully by a religious education for his duties in life. Thus the young men of the three highest castes, at this time, had the priceless ideal of a chaste adolescence held before them, and doubtless many lived up to the rule.

But this rule of universal education for the males of the Aryan castes fell, at a later date, into disuse, and multitudes of Brāhman, Kshatriya, and Vaiśya youths did not go to school at all. Yet the ancient ceremonial was kept up. About the age of puberty, or earlier, each boy underwent initiation and received the sacred thread. Then, since he did not go to school, there was nothing in the way of marriage. Hence arose the evil custom which has long been prevalent in Bengal and elsewhere,² to marry mere boys. The competition for eligible husbands is so keen that the parents of sons are usually approached early, and there is great temptation to hurry on the match. Hence, boys may be found in High Schools to-day who are not only husbands but fathers. The influence of the Social Reform Movement is very valuable in this matter.

¹ See below, p. 163.

² See Ranade, pp. 315, 316, for examples of boys married at eight, nine, or ten in the family of the Peshwas.

*2 The second principle is that a man must not marry a woman, who is a *sapinda*¹. This rule corresponds to our law of prohibited degrees. The other rules which guide a man in selecting a wife are that he must marry *within* his caste, but *outside* his own clan subdivision of the caste².

3. The third principle is that the authority of the husband in the family is absolute.

First, he has full authority over his wife. One of the most touching passages in Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā* is the scene³ in which King Dushyanta her husband, failing to remember her, refuses to acknowledge her as his wife, and her own friends who have pled her cause so eagerly leave her standing⁴ disowned and dishonoured before the king with the words,

Śakuntalā is by law thy wife, whether thou desert or acknowledge her, and the dominion of a husband is absolute.

Śakuntalā wishes to return with her friends, but one turns to her and says angrily,

O wife, who seest the faults of thy lord, dost thou desire independence?⁵ and another asks her,

If thou art what the king proclaims thee, what right hast thou to complain? But if thou knowest the purity of thine own soul, it will become thee to wait as a handmaid in the mansion of thy lord.

Since, then, the husband's authority is absolute, it is the wife's duty to be absolutely obedient to her husband.

Him to whom her father may give her, she shall obey as long as he lives.⁶

He is her sole authority. Tiruvalluvar, the Tamil poet, says of a good woman,

Bowing not before the gods but before her husband⁷

Whatever his character may be, her duty is to be utterly loyal to him and to worship him as her divinity.

¹ See p. 84 above. This rule varies in its practical meaning in different parts of India. See Trevelyan, 34-37.

² Trevelyan, 32-4.

³ See below p. 90.

⁴ *Manu* v 15

⁵ Act v

⁶ *Heart of India* 05

Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure elsewhere, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife¹

Sītā says,

My husband is a god to me²

If a wife obeys her husband, she will be exalted in heaven.³
If disobedient, the law says she may be chastised.

A wife . . . who has committed faults may be beaten with a rope or a split bamboo.⁴

This law would not be upheld in an Indian law-court to-day, but it still influences opinion. If she persists in opposition, she may be superseded

A barren wife may be superseded in the eighth year, she whose children all die in the tenth, she who bears only daughters in the eleventh but she who is quarrelsome without delay⁵

Secondly, as father, his authority is absolute over his son as long as he lives. Whatever he orders the son is bound to do, even if it be the greatest possible crime. This is a very serious matter in the case of the criminal tribes, which are found all over India. When they are Hindus, the son of a thief or a coiner is guilty of sin, if he refuses to obey his father and join him in his criminal occupation. Here is what Rāma, the ideal son, says on this point.

I have no power to slight or break
Commandments which my father spake . . .
Once Kanda mighty saint, who made
His dwelling in the forest shade,
A cov—and duty's claims he knew—
Obedient to his father, slew . . .
So Jamadagni's son obeyed
His sire, when in the wood he laid
His hand upon his axe, and smote
Through Renuka his mother's throat

¹ *Manu*, v 154.

² Griffith, II xxix

³ *Manu*, v 155.

⁴ *Manu*, vi 299.

⁵ *Manu*, x 8

Till death and do see
 Pleurs of the Gods my steps shall guide,
 And resolute will I fulfil
 My father's word, my father's will.

Nearly all the remaining features of the Hindu family have arisen directly from the supreme position of the father, and the consequent depreciation of woman. As the Hindu family developed in the early centuries, its inner character manifested itself in institutions

4 One of the earliest results was the establishment of the joint family. In this system a man's son brings his bride into the paternal mansion, and the daughter is taken by her husband to his father's house. Thus all the male descendants of the householder down to the third or even the fourth generation, if he happen to survive so long, and also the unmarried guls, live in the one house with him under his complete control. The landed property of the family and the income of any wage-earning members there may be are in the house-father's hand and are used by him for the needs of the whole family. Every member of the family owes complete obedience to the head of the family in all things. Thus, no matter how old a man may be, he is still a minor, if his father, grandfather, or great-grandfather is alive, and must obey him implicitly. Without his consent he cannot marry nor undertake anything of importance. Here we have the patriarchal family in its most expanded form. Sometimes as many as seventy or eighty persons will be found under one roof all of them lineal descendants of the patriarch, or wives or widows of such descendants. No wonder that the family consciousness is greatly developed among Hindus, and that the interests of the family bulk large in every Hindu mind.

Several fine results spring from this particular type of organization. The selfish individualistic motive gets little room to grow, for each contributes to the welfare of all the

others, and if one son is peculiarly successful, his income brings extra comfort to the whole family. Every member of the family, no matter how useless or weak, is well taken care of. Each feels responsible for all the others. It is the family that counts, not the individual. Every woman in the house is the mother of all the children, and cousins feel as nearly related as if they were brothers. On the other hand, no one gets the opportunity of developing a self-reliant character of his own, except the head of the household.

This aspect of Hindu family life has begun to break down under the influence of Western thought and life, and very large changes are sure to come. In the childhood of the world a man could afford to live as a member of a family; but in modern times the individual counts for more and more.

But the most important results of the full development of patriarchal authority show themselves in the depreciation and complete subjection of women. While the family reached its strong position in ancient India through the power vested in the father yet his supreme position made it impossible for the wife to receive adequate recognition. Nowhere else in all the world have things gone so far as they have in India. As we have already seen, the patriarchal family everywhere tends to exalt man and to depreciate woman. The full unfolding of the inner nature of that system in India reduced women to complete subjection, and led to the growth of a set of customs which have no parallel in the world elsewhere.

§ Hindu lawgivers unanimously declare that a woman is always in subjection, to her father, to her husband, or to her son; she can never have any independence.

Let her be in subjection to her father in her childhood, to her husband in her youth, to her sons when her husband is dead; let a woman never enjoy independence.¹

There is a line in the *Rāmāyana* which gives beautiful expression to the Hindu idea of wifely loyalty:

As the shadow to the substance, to her lord is faithful wife.¹
Yet how vividly it expresses also her hopeless inferiority. The idea is, not that the married relation places a woman in subjection to her husband, but that woman is essentially an inferior being. This is no mere popular prejudice, but a doctrine of Hinduism. In the *Bhagavadgītā*² we read that a woman is born such because of sin in a former life, and in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* we read:

Owing to my bad deeds in former lives I got a woman's body, which is a source of great misery.³

This belief in the essential inferiority of woman led to the Buddhist conviction that no woman can attain *nirvāṇa* until she be reborn as a man.

We shall take the other developments as far as possible in historical order, beginning with two which come from very early times.

6 Away in the far-back ages, before the Aryan people had split up, the establishment of the patriarchal family led to the universal desire for sons and to the custom of exposing a large proportion of the female children born. This custom, which, as we know, persisted throughout classic times in Europe until the influence of Christ put it down, seems to have been brought by the Indo-Aryans into India with them, and the practice continued in certain sections of the people unchecked until 1830, when the British Government began a long-continued crusade for its extinction. So ingrained was the habit in many Indian castes and tribes that the determination of the British Government to put it down was in many places baffled for years, and the best authorities are doubtful whether it does not persist in certain quarters to some extent even to-day.

7 Polygamy is another of the universal concomitants of

¹ R. C. Dutt's *Rāmāyana* I v. 10

² ix. 32

³ *Garuḍa Purāṇa* Sa. *līkṣā* a. 1. 4

the patriarchal family, inevitably arising from the idea that a man is of far greater value and importance than a woman. This custom also was brought by the ancestors of the Hindus into India with them. It was known, but little practised, in the age of the *Rigveda*. Yet, throughout Hindu history down to our own day, it has been recognized that kings and men of wealth or of social position, have a right to marry several wives, and that no man is restricted to one. The number of a king's wives has always been a measure of his wealth and power. In the Law of Manu a Brāhman is allowed four wives, a Kshatriya three, a Vaiśya two¹. Most of the Hindu gods are polygamous. Vishṇu and Brāhmā, for example, have three consorts each.

In modern times however, monogamy has become the rule for ordinary Hindus of all castes. The Kulin Brāhmans of Bengal, who until quite recently used to marry scores of women, were a lonely and ghastly exception. Down to some fifty years ago, however, the rule of monogamy was tempered by concubinage for all those who desired it and could afford it;² and, though public opinion is now seriously opposed to it, in certain parts of the country it seems to be still practised. Many princes are still polygamists.

Further, although monogamy is the usual practice, Hindu society holds firmly to the idea that the right to marry a second wife remains. Every Hindu marriage is *in posse* polygamous.³ A Hindu marries in order that he may have a son. Hence, if his wife bears him no son, it is his duty to marry another in order to obtain a son. While these lines are being written, the newspapers announce that the daughter of the Gaekwar of Baroda is to become the second wife of the Mahārāja Scindia, because his first wife has not borne him an

¹ III. 13, also *Baudhāyana*, I. viii 16, 1-4, *Pārashara*, I. 4, 8-11. For these castes see below, p. 163.

² *E. A. E. V.* 739. Cf. p. 395, below.

³ Trevelyan, 29. Hence it is unsafe for an European woman to marry a Hindu.

her.¹ I frequently see wife herself begs the husband to take a second wife. Yet many a Hindu is too loyal and too deeply attached to his wife to do so. Finally, if a man finds his wife stubborn and troublesome, Hindu law gives him the right to marry another, as we have seen above.²

8 But though in the times of the *Rigveda* infanticide and polygamy were both known, yet the patriarchal family was not far developed. Women had a great deal of liberty and a great deal of power, and the family was on the whole healthy. But at a later date the family began to change. Two innovations come from the times of the *Brahmanas*. The first of these is the rise of the joint family, which we have already discussed. The other is the appearance of the rule that a man must not eat with his wife. This rule occurs in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,³ is repeated in all the law-books, and is in full force in every Hindu household to-day. The emergence of this extraordinary rule at this early date, the seventh or eighth century B. C., shows that already the power of the father was growing, and that woman was being relegated to a far lower place than that which she held in the times of the *Rigveda*.

9 Nor do we have to travel far to find further evidence of this tendency. As we saw above,⁴ it became the rule, at a very early date, that every boy of the three twice-born castes should receive an education in one of the *Brahmanical* schools. But girls were not admitted to the schools; the Vedas were forbidden to women as strictly as to *Śūdras*.⁵ No provision was made for female education, and women were excluded from the noble culture which their fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons received.⁶ A further result was

¹ The engagement has since been broken off.

² p. 88.

³ X. v. 2, 9, I. ix. 2, 12, *Gautama*, ix. 32, *Vasishtha*, xii. 31, *Manu*, iv. 43.

⁴ p. 86.

⁵ *Manu* ix. 18. For *Śūdras*, see p. 163.

⁶ Want of school education does not necessarily make a man or a woman uneducated. In the ancient world very few children went to school yet there were considerable numbers of cultured people both men and women. There was very little school education in Hellenic Greece.

that, with the exception of the marriage ceremony, every domestic sacrament was performed without *mantras* (i.e. Vedic texts) in the case of girls¹ and a woman could perform no sacrifice without her husband.²

10 About the same time it became recognized as a Hindu religious law that a girl ought to be married before she reaches the age of puberty.³ Here we get some light on the question of education, marriage in the case of girls took the place of Initiation, the religious ceremony which began a boy's education. The Law of Manu puts this quite clearly⁴. It seems certain that pre-puberty marriage was already recognized as the ideal in the sixth century B.C., for it is found in the earliest existing law-book, the *Dharmasūtra* of Gautama, which is placed by scholars before 500 B.C., and in all later treatises on law,

yet the heroes were men of judgement and taste. Akbar is a modern example. So, throughout the history of Hinduism, there have been illiterate men and here and there also women, who have shown great capacity and considerable culture. Yet it remains true that for many centuries Hindu women, whether of the upper or of the lower classes, have been uneducated, except in so far as their religion has given them wider interests. The facts which told against them most of all were child-marriage, their ignorance of Sanskrit—the language of science and culture—and finally the zenāna: what race of women could break through such barriers?

In the earlier periods of the history we occasionally meet educated women. Many of these cases occurred in communities where the Brāhmanic law was not yet rigorously enforced, and the others are mostly cases of individual women in peculiar circumstances.

Though the study of the Ved is and of the Sacred Law is absolutely forbidden to women, they are not without literature. The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* in the original and in many vernacular adaptations are theirs; the *Purāṇas* also, and the whole range of vernacular literature, many parts of which are exceedingly rich.

Women have at various times taken a place in Indian literature. Some hymns of the *Rigveda* were composed by women, we meet them as interlocutors in the Upanishads; there is a volume of Psalms, the *Therīgāthā*, which is the work of Buddhist nuns, and a Rājput princess, named Mirabāī, was a gifted poetess and religious leader.

¹ *Āśvulāyana*, I. 15, 10, *Manu*, II. 67.

² *Gautama*, XIII. 1, *Afāstamba*, II. vi. 15, 17, *Manu*, IV. 205-206; v. 155, ix. 18, xi. 36.

³ *Gautama*, XIII. 21-23, *Vasishtha*, xvii. 69-70; *Baudhāyana*, IV. 1. 11-12. Also *Manu*, ix. 4, 88 and all the other books.

but it was not generally practised among Hindus until several centuries later. For a long time it continued to be the Indian custom to marry a girl at the age of sixteen. This stands out quite clear in the literature, Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain, of the fifth, fourth, and third centuries. It was the steady pressure of the Brāhmanical law that introduced the change. By the beginning of our era at latest the change was complete. We may note here also that many Hindu princesses of the early centuries were allowed to choose their own husbands; the custom is known as *svayamvāra* a self-choice.

But the matter does not end there, for parents (especially when the caste-group within which marriage is possible is narrow), fearing they may fail to secure a bridegroom at the right moment, marry their daughter when a suitable bridegroom is available, no matter how young the girl may be. This is how the practice of marrying little children or even infants arose. The child does not go to her husband's home until she is eleven or twelve, yet the marriage is absolutely binding. Hence, through the death of husbands in the intervening years, there are multitudes of Hindu widows who have never been wives.

We can only guess at the causes that led to the establishment of child-marriage, yet all inquirers are agreed that it is one of the clearest proofs possible that the Hindu woman was already in complete subjection. But though no one knows precisely what it was that led the Hindus to formulate this law, yet, in the earliest documents in which it occurs a clear, comprehensible, religious reason is already suggested for the practice. The law appears in the *Dharmasūtra* of Gautama and in nearly all the later law-books. In each one we are told that the father who does not see that his daughter is married before the menses appear commits sin,¹ and in most of the books the sin is said to be equivalent to abortion.² Clearly

¹ See the passages referred to above, p. 94 n. 3.

² *Baudhāyana*, IV. 1. 12, *Varaṇśtha*, xvii. 71, and also *Bṛiḥvaṣṭi*, *Paśara Śūlāśra*, *Vyāsa* 1. *Yājñ* *kyā*, *Hār* *aś* *n* *śra*, *Angirā*, *Viś* *u* *Y* *na*.

the ancient Hindu believed that to fail to give a girl at puberty the chance of bearing a child was, so to speak, to prevent the birth which ought to come and therefore was as sinful as destroying an embryo. This belief, in its sensateness to the claims of life, recalls the law of *ahimsā* which arose about the same time, viz. that an ascetic must not kill animals, nor even break off a living twig¹. Another rule, which rests on the same basis, runs that the husband who does not approach his wife after her monthly sickness commits sin.² Thus what makes child-marriage obligatory to the Hindu is the belief that to fail to give a girl at puberty the chance of becoming a mother is sinful.

II. The next downward step was the prohibition of widow-remarriage. Already by 500 B.C. only the childless widow was allowed to remarry,³ but the law is first laid down for all widows in the great law-book of Manu.⁴ As this code took several centuries to grow it is impossible to fix the exact date of any law contained in it, yet we shall not be far wrong if we conclude that this regulation that no widow may remarry, was already in force at the opening of the Christian era. Even a virgin child-widow is condemned to perpetual widowhood. Yet the very law which forbids the widow to take another husband expressly bids the widower remarry.

The origin of widow-celibacy is to be found in the Hindu idea of marriage. A Hindu woman marries, not merely 'for better for worse' but for this world and the next. There is marriage in heaven⁵ amongst both gods and men, according to Hindu belief. The following words of Sītā in the *Rāmāyana*⁶ will make the matter plain.

Still close my lord, to thy dear side
My spirit will be purified.

¹ See below, pp. 250, 256

² *Bṛuhadyana*, IV. 1, 17-19; *Mitra*, ix. 4

³ *Caṇvama*, xviii. 4-17; *Vasishtha*, xvii. 55-68, 74.

⁴ v. 155-160.

⁵ See below, p. 297 f.

⁶ *Gṛnitha*, II. xix. cf. *Narada* 5 56

Lov¹ fo² s³ y so l w⁴ ee
 My husband is a god to me²
 So, love, with thee shall I have b⁵ss
 And share the life that follows this.
 I heard a Brāhman, dear to fame,
 This ancient scripture text proclaim
 'The woman who on earth below
 Her parents on a man bestow,
 And lawfully their hands unite
 With water and each holy rite,
 She in this world shall be his wife,
 His also in the after life.'

This belief gave point to wifely loyalty and faithfulness; for unless a wife proved a good woman and faithful to her lord, she could not expect to rejoin him in heaven.³

There is, then, another fact to be noticed. A girl is born a member of her father's family and belongs to him, but at marriage the father gives her to her husband and she becomes incorporated into his family⁴. Then, if her husband dies, she cannot again be grafted into her father's family⁵ it is impossible to play fast and loose with religious ties. Her closest relationship is with her husband, who is in the other world. So that, to the Hindu, she no longer quite belongs to ordinary society, but is in a way outside it, like the sannyāsī⁶.

Since Hindus thought in this way, we are not astonished to hear that at an early date it became customary that the widow who was a mother should not remarry. Then, later, the rule was extended to childless widows, and even to virgin widows who had never lived with a husband. A Hindu woman's virtue came to be summed up in life-long loyalty to the man to whom her father had given her, whether he was alive or dead⁷. If she was left a widow, it was her duty to set her whole heart on her coming reunion with her lord in heaven⁸.

¹ This is the sin which led to her birth as a woman. See above, p. 91.

² See above, p. 88.

³ *Manu*, v. 161.

⁴ *Āpastamba* II. x. 27. 3. *Mahābhārata* I. x. 1. 1. Ranade. *Essays*. 34.

⁵ Evelyn 62. 63.

⁶ See below p. 54.

Manu v. 56.

⁸ *M* u v 158. 60. 16. 165, 166. II. 29.

Consequently the noble Hindu woman, trained in these convictions from her babyhood, cannot bear the idea of a second marriage. To take another partner would be to be untrue to everything which she holds most noble and most sacred. The hard discipline and the long sorrow of widowhood are infinitely preferable to that.

This idea could never arise with regard to a Hindu husband, and that for two reasons. He was, at least potentially, a polygamist: the duty of loyalty to one woman could not emerge in his case. Then, if his deceased wife was his only wife, he had to marry again, in order to have his wife with him at the sacrifices.¹

12. The next act in the tragic history of the Hindu woman is the introduction of the custom of *satī* or widow-burning. This notorious custom is not an ancient thing in Hinduism. Many savage tribes have the idea that a man will require in the other world all that he has enjoyed in this. So his house and his wife are slain on his tomb, and his weapons are buried with him. The Indo-Aryans had given up this inhuman custom; for there is the clearest proof that it was not in use in the times of the *Rigveda*, nor for many centuries later. How it was revived, we do not know, probably through imitation of some of the aboriginal tribes. The use of the practice among a civilized people like the Hindus would be altogether incomprehensible but for the peculiar constitution of the Hindu family. We find the first beginnings of the classical Hindu custom in the later portions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.² It came into vogue gradually and the history is not known. Kālidāsa's *Birth of the War-god*³ shows that it was already well known by A.D. 400, and it receives legal recognition in the *Viśnūsmṛiti*.⁴ It is praised in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*,⁵ but is condemned in the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*.⁶ It was but a permissive statute: the widow was allowed to

¹ *Manu*, v 167-169

² Canto v

³ *Garuḍa Purāṇa Sāroddha* a x. 35-55

⁴ *Great Epics*, 81.

xxv 4.

⁵ x. 79.

mount her husband's pyre, if she chose to do so. Yet the records prove that there were unwilling victims. Rām Mohan Rai saw his own brother's widow burnt to death despite her attempt to escape.

Akbar, the Mughal emperor, prohibited it but failed to put it down. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the evil had reached colossal proportions, so that Bentinck's act of abolition required considerable courage and firmness.¹ It was in Bengal that the largest number of cases occurred, yet the practice was well known all over India. At certain courts at least, a great holocaust of women took place on the death of the king.²

The rise of such a custom seems at first sight inexplicable, almost incredible, but it is quite comprehensible when the Hindu ideal of wifely loyalty and the belief in the joyous heavenly reunion are taken into account. A woman who has been happily married and is deeply attached to her husband suddenly loses him. Overwhelmed with grief, she does not want to live. The hard asceticism and lonely misery of widowhood make the outlook all the darker. On the other hand, she has only to endure the pyre, and she will immediately have a rapturous reunion with her lord in heaven.³ Even in these days, eighty years after Bentinck's orders, *safē* is not unknown. Quite recently, near Calcutta, a bereaved wife, in the exultation of her anguish, determinedly burned herself in her own room at the very time when the body of her husband was being consumed on the pyre. When such a case occurs, the Hindu community thrills with sympathy and reverence. The old religious ideas have by no means lost all their force.

There is much here which we Westerners can understand. How many a wife, and husband too who has lost a beloved partner, could never dream of a second union!

¹ *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1885, 498.

² *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1885, 94. Cf. also R. A. D. 37 H. V. L. Benares.

And what to her shall be the end?
 And what to me remains of good?
 To her, perpetual maidenhood,
 And unto me no second friend.

With the love and self-devotion of the *sati* we can deeply sympathize. How many broken-hearted widows and widowers have prayed for easeful death!

But what we can scarcely understand is how these tragic glooms and awful ordeals could be imposed as laws upon weak women, while men went their own way in comfort and freedom, and above all how the dark sorrows of widowhood could be laid on smiling infants and little toddling mites, equally innocent of love, marriage, and death.

13 Long before the practice of widow-sacrifice arose, it was regarded as a fitting thing that a widow should live a mildly ascetic life, enduring hardships and subsisting on a vegetarian diet.¹ When *sati* became common, the ascetic life became compulsory for those who did not mount the pyre. The original idea seems to have been that, with the death of her husband, the widow passed out of society, like the monk, and therefore it seemed right that she should practise his asceticism.

To-day every widow is condemned to perpetual mourning and austerity. In Bengal the rule is that a widow has to lay aside all her ornaments, wear a *sari* without a border, subsist on a vegetarian diet, eat only one solid meal per day, and twice a month pass a whole day of twenty-four hours without eating and drinking, and this rule is applied even to girl-widows.² A woman's hair is her glory, the last piece of beauty she cares to part with. In large sections of India the barber shaves away the widow's glossy tresses and leaves her a tonsured nun.³ It seems likely that a high religious purpose was once present in this ascetic life, but if so, the spirit of it has not been preserved. Were the widow a sort of stay-at-home nun,

¹ *Manu* v. 56-158

² A Hindu widow is allowed a light supper

³ *I S R.*, Dec. 9, 1909 p 185 Feb 20 1910 p 296

voluntarily renouncing the world, devoting herself to a life of prayer and meditation, one could understand the ideal, but, oh the pity of it! the widowed children of India are compelled to live a severely ascetic life, and are usually given a heavy share of the household drudgery as well. Finally, the doctrine of transmigration and karma is used to make the poor girl responsible for her husband's death: if she had not sinned grievously in a previous life, he would not have died. How strange that this religious inference is not used with similar effect in the case of the husband who loses his wife! The widow is driven away from scenes of happiness and rejoicing as a guilty thing likely to bring ill-luck. 'Her hard lot, her life-long misery and degradation, her endless fasts and privations,' are the words used by a Hindu to describe the widow's experience¹. It is a relief to the heart to realize that, though the life of penance and drudgery is everywhere the rule, widows are not treated with equal harshness in all parts of India. It is not that Hindus are hard-hearted: it is the beliefs and the laws that are at fault.

14 The last downward step, fatefully possible because of all that had gone before it, was the acceptance of the custom of secluding the women of the upper castes in the women's apartments and cutting them off from all participation in public life. Surely a fitting climax to their seclusion from the noble education of ancient India! The custom arose among Hindus during the Muhammadan period, perhaps partly in imitation of their masters, but partly also in self-defence. The practice does not affect in the same degree those provinces that came little under Muhammadan influence, and the women of the lower classes usually lead a very free life. On the other hand, the zenāna system, like strict caste rules, child-marriage, enforced widowhood, and other characteristics of high-caste life, is copied, as a patent of nobility, by the lower castes — as the r means w'l allow

C Yet, despite the crushing weight of patriarchal authority and all its pitiable results, the Hindu home hides some very beautiful things. The faithfulness, devotion, and love of the wife and mother the humility and willing ministry of the broken-hearted widow the obedience and affection of the sons and daughters, even when grown up, the subdued joy and shady retirement of the zenāpa, the sacramental note present always and everywhere—these are things of real worth and beauty exquisite as a bed of scented violets in an English forest-glade. There are Hindu mothers belonging to all castes whose place and power in the home show that human nature is often too strong for human law. They are treated with supreme respect by both husband and children, and live lives of great influence and usefulness. Yet they are but exceptions, and their position is altogether insecure. Further, high-caste women are to be met here and there who though illiterate, are cultured, thoughtful, and capable. They know by heart large parts of the religious literature. Their practical and religious training has made them women of character and capacity. Their husbands rely on their judgement, and they wield great influence in their homes. The Hindu family has produced these rich fruits amidst ignorance, oppression, injustice. What may we not look for from this thrice-noble race of women, when they receive their rightful freedom, education, and position?

Then depreciation and subjugation are not the whole truth about Hindu women. According to Hindu law, the wife may accept and hold property of her own which even her husband cannot touch¹. Social reformers complain that the law is frequently rendered nugatory many a wife can be brought to surrender her property by the threat of a second wife.² Yet the law exists, and is frequently taken advantage of.

D These regulations for the family are very widely

¹ *Manu*, viii. 28-29, ix. 104, 131, 192-198. For a modern statement of the rights of a Hindu wife see *I.C.R.* Dec. 5 1909 p. 62.
I.S.R. Sep. 10 9 pp. 6 ff.

followed by Hindus throughout the country; but they are by no means universal. While the laws of the Dharmasūtras and Dharmasāstras are very generally revered and obeyed, there is a far greater law than any of them, the law of custom—

Let him walk in that path of holy men which his father and his grandfathers followed, while he walks in that he will not suffer harm,—¹

which overrides every other law.² If a Hindu can prove that a custom has been faithfully observed in his family or caste for generations, then it is right and obligatory for him no matter how immoral anti-social, or revolting it may be. Hence the marriage laws of many castes do not conform to Hindu rule. The younger sons of the Nambutūri Brāhmins of Travancore practise polyandry; among certain South Indian castes the marriage of a man with his niece is permitted; some castes practise divorce; in others it is considered right to marry a daughter to an idol, a flower, a sword, or some other material object and to allow her to lead thereafter the life of a prostitute,³ while in many temples there are *devadāsīs*, servants of the god, dedicated by their relatives, who do take part from time to time in the services, but whose real occupation is immorality.⁴

E. There are several points in the Hindu family that are inconsistent with the doctrine of transmigration and karma. The basis of the worship of the 'fathers' is the two ideas, that they have won immortality in heaven, and that the offerings enable them to retain their place there. But transmigration teaches that they must return to earth to be born again, and, according to the karma doctrine, nothing that any survivor on earth can do can alter their destiny by one hair's breadth: that is settled by their own karma and that alone, so that there is a double inconsistency. The law

¹ *Manu* v 78.

² See Lord Moleys Dispatch of March 3, 1911

³ See below p 313

that a widow must remain faithful to her dead husband, and look forward to a happy union with him in heaven, clearly arose before the appearance of the doctrine of transmigration, and is scarcely consistent with it, for it is quite possible that the husband's karma may cause him to be reborn before his widow dies.

On the other hand, the karma hypothesis is used, as we have seen, to make the widow responsible for her husband's death. It also provides a justification for the belief in the inferiority of women: the theory is that they sinned seriously in a former life, and that then evil karma makes them women.

III. The Hindu family stood four-square for over two thousand years; for, although changes took place after the Christian era, in its main lines the structure was complete by 500 B.C. During all these long centuries its institutions scarcely underwent a criticism. Nay they spread outside the Hindu community and affected both Muslims and Christians. But about 1800 A.D. Christian criticism began to make itself heard, especially in the writings of the Serampore missionaries. Here, as in every other department of Western influence, Rām Mohan Rai, the founder of the Brāhma Samāj, was the first Hindu to respond and to turn to practical action. He wrote against polygamy, and his share in the agitation which led Lord William Bentinck to put down *sati* in 1829 was not inconsiderable. Debendranāth Tagore, the next leader of the Brāhma Samāj, rebelled against the polytheistic and idolatrous character of the sacraments (*samśkāras*) of the Hindu family, and prepared a purified manual for the use of Brāhma families, but did not recognize that he was acting under the influence of Christ. Keshab Chandra Sen saw far more clearly whence the light was coming and confessed it. His condemnation of child-marriage and other abuses led not only to real reform among those who followed him, but took shape in a Marriage Act passed by Lord Lawrence's Government in 1872. One of Keshab's contemporaries was Isvara

Chand a Vidyasagara, a Calcutta pandit of great learning, who, realizing that in the earliest ages Hindu widows were free to marry, and also seeing clearly the grave evils which the prohibition leads to in modern life, spoke and wrote in favour of restoring the old freedom with so much power that Government agreed and passed the necessary Act in 1865. Mr Justice Ranade, one of the leaders of the Prāithanā Samāj, founded in Bombay in 1867, is the next outstanding leader in family reform. To him we owe the organization of the social reform movement, which every year holds one national and several local conferences. Its organ, the *Indian Social Reformer*, exercises a most healthy influence. The only other name we need mention is Rao Bahadur Vīcśālingam Pantulu, whose influence for good both in social reform and in literature has been very great, especially in the Telugu country where he has his home. It is worthy of notice that the members of the Ārya Samāj condemn child-marriage and permit widow remarriage. But the most significant fact of all is this, that the Theosophical Society, the Rāmakṛishna Mission, and the caste and sect conferences, although they defend the whole of Hinduism, yet advocate certain measures of reform, especially the postponement of the age of marriage and the education of girls.

It is also most noticeable that the progress of the national movement greatly strengthens the forces making for social reform. The loud demand of the Congress for progress, for economic change, for men and women of character to make the country great, helps the young student to realize that his sisters should be educated, that they should not be married until they have had an effective education, and that his widowed aunt should either be allowed to become a happy mother, or be trained to be a teacher, a nurse, or a doctor, in order to help in the uplifting of the girls and women of the country. Even the Hindu revival helps the cause of social reform. The Hindu school the class for the study of the *Gita* the *Central Hindu College Magazine* and other revival

literature, are all useful in making men think, in letting in the light, and so preparing the way for reform.

There are two fields of social reform in India, caste and the family. The latter has until now bulked most largely, and there the best results have been achieved. Apart from minor issues, there are four reforms which are demanded. These are the raising of the age of marriage for girls, education for girls, widow remarriage, and the suppression of polygamy. Opinion varies a good deal among the educated on these topics, yet all, or nearly all, recognize the need of the first two, the raising of the age of marriage and the provision of education for girls. On the subject of the remarriage of widows there are still many opinions; and, while most recognize that monogamy is the true ideal, a good many pleas are still heard in favour of a second marriage when the first proves childless. It is most significant that all the outstanding political leaders have declared most emphatically that, for the regeneration of India, the three reforms—female education, the raising of the age of marriage, and freedom for widows to remarry—are absolutely necessary. It is at first sight rather remarkable that one hardly ever hears a word raised against the pagan ceremonial of the funeral and the śrāddha ceremonies, but, when one looks more closely, the reason is plain as we shall see.

A. The criticism directed against the Hindu family by Indian reformers is simply Christian criticism.

1. They point out that child-marriage robs the little wife of her adolescence and her chance of an education, that she has no girlhood, but passes at once from her childish years into the great strain of married life and premature child-bearing whence come only too often an enfeebled physique, an impaired mind and an early death; that the physique of the children suffers and in consequence the physique of the whole race, and that female education can make no serious progress until the age of marriage is altered. It is also stated that the moral results of plunging a little girl into all that

married life means are very serious; that her character never gets an opportunity of gathering strength and settling, and that, in consequence, hysteria and unbalanced feeling are painfully common among Hindu women.

One aspect of Hindu family life much commented on by reformers is a result of the combined action of child-marriage and widow-celibacy.¹ When middle-aged or old men remarry, they are compelled to take mere children as their wives. Hence all over the country, men of forty, fifty, sixty, or even seventy years are married to little girls of twelve, or even of more tender years, for no one pretends that Hindu society obeys the law of 1891 which forbids cohabitation before twelve.

It is also pointed out that, if no Hindu girl were married until she were, say, fourteen, there would be far fewer widows in Hindu society, and the whole class of virgin widows would be eliminated.

2 The education of girls is advocated by Hindu reformers partly as a right which ought not to be withheld, but mainly on the ground that it is absolutely essential if the family is to become healthy and the race is to reach real efficiency. The value of educated mothers is very clearly realized, and the most pitious waste arising from the present system is constantly set forth in the press. Women teachers both for schools and zenānas are wanted in large numbers, nurses and lady doctors are in great request, and cultured women to lead the ordinary Hindu woman to a higher life. The educated Hindu wants to marry an educated girl, but is seldom able to realize his wish.

3 The same pair of reasons are put forward in favour of giving the Hindu widow the right to remarry if she wish to do so. Reformers plead that it is wrong to refuse to give the widow the liberty which without question is conceded to the widower, and to compel her to live a life of severe asceticism.

and drudgery. The plea is made with increased emphasis in the case of virgin widows. But most Hindus lay stress on the expediency rather than on the justice of the reform. They set forth the very serious moral dangers to which the widow, and above all the young widow, is exposed, and they point out that if widows were allowed to marry, widowers could readily find suitable partners.

4. Polygamy is not so often discussed in public, yet all the more thoughtful men feel very strongly about it. The chief conviction behind the agitation is the deep indignity and humiliation which polygamy brings to the first wife; but the moral results on the husband are also emphasized. On the other hand, so few Hindus have more than one wife that at first sight polygamy seems a small matter in comparison with other abuses. But another aspect of the question has recently been brought into public notice, namely the unlimited power which this right of polygamy puts into the hands of unscrupulous men and the very serious suffering many women undergo in consequence. Child-marriage usually secures the complete subjection of the wife to her husband. The little girl is brought into her father-in-law's home; and, being but a child, naturally and necessarily comes under the domination of her husband, who is at least several years older than herself. In domestic matters she is subject to her mother-in-law. The Hindu points out that by this means the wife is trained to complete obedience and perfect submission. But if a wife, despite this rigorous training, shows any signs of independence of spirit, the threat of a second marriage is at once used, and the poor child is cowed. The same threat may enable an unscrupulous husband to use his wife's private property.

B The whole social reform movement is a most healthy influence in modern India. The changes it is producing on the Hindu mind and conscience are very precious. Yet, if its progress is to be measured by actual results in family life, it must be acknowledged to be very slow. The stalwarts constantly speak of the appalling contrast between the specious

and the actions of many of the leading reformers. How many leaders from Keshab down to the Gaekwar of Baroda have been pilloried in the press as 'backsliders'! But, though the actions of these men do stand out in painful contrast with their public protestations, yet the slowness of the advance of social reform cannot, in justice, be laid at their door: they are a symptom rather than the cause. Indeed it seems clear that social reformers have not at all realized what the mighty power is which thwarts their efforts.

The usual explanation given of the slow progress of social reform in the Hindu community, namely that it has to contend against all the forces of conservatism and stagnation, does not go to the root of the matter. There is an infinite difference between a reform which is in fullest consonance with the clear teaching of the religion of a people, and a reform which is diametrically opposed to the spirit, the law, the institutions, and the traditions of the national faith. The temperance movement, for example, is a comparatively easy crusade among Hindus. But the life of women is an altogether different matter. For more than two thousand years the Hindu people have been taught that a girl does not require an education, but that it is sinful not to marry her before puberty; and that a man may remarry as often as he is widowed, but that a widow who even thinks of remarrying is unfaithful to her husband and will suffer after death for her conduct. It is these deep religious ideas that retard the progress of social reform. The educated man is personally ready for reform, but his women-folk and all his relatives and caste-friends who have not had a modern education are still dominated by the old religious beliefs. This is the gigantic barrier that stands in the way of the re-creation of the Hindu family.

We may well ask whether in such circumstances the reforms ought to be seriously pressed. Should the women of a household be driven to consent to that which they do not think right merely because the head of the house has become so captivated by his education as to be ready to say as de t e

religious scruples which still sway their simple hearts? Will not the true man's sympathy be with the women? Is it manly, is it honourable to drive them to act in flat disobedience to their consciences? If we are seeking to uplift the Hindu woman, shall we begin by doing violence to her religious convictions? May not the postponement of a wedding for a few years or the remarriage of a widow be too dearly bought at such a price? Does it not seem as if there were something wrong with the method of the social reformer?

One Hindu thinker has come very near a true appreciation of the present state of affairs. The following is a quotation from a paper read by Mr V Śrinivāsa Rao, of Berhampore, before the Ganjam Hindu Reform Association.¹

Our present-day social practices are no doubt the natural outcome of certain religious beliefs. Unless such beliefs are shaken, the present social practices cannot be permanently shaken. If an attempt is made, as has till now been made, to shake the present-day social customs, without previously or simultaneously attempting to shake their foundations deep-rooted in religious beliefs, the result cannot be otherwise than what it is at present, viz. a creation of many halting and half-hearted 'sympathizers' of social reform, who accept one reform and oppose another, evidently being oblivious to the fact that the same root principles underlie all the reforms and are opposed to the principles that gave rise to the existing social customs. What are the principles that gave rise to the present-day social practices which are sought to be reformed? They may be many, but chief of them seem to be three, as shown below. The principles are so deep-rooted that they took the form of regular and essential institutions.

- 1 Undue reverence to Shastras, which regards the Shastras to be supernatural, God-revealed, unchangeable, and the violation of their dictates, however violent to the conscience and reason, to be sinful, and which believes that the present-day social customs are based on them as interpreted by the old, priestly class and tradition, however one may now try to prove that the Shastras do not advocate such customs. This belief is responsible for the prohibition against widow marriages, post-puberty marriages, &c. The father of a young virgin widow feels for his daughter's misery

as much as anybody else, but he feels unable to go against the custom which he believes to be based on the dictates of the God-given Shastras

- 10 Ideas of caste system, which introduce and perpetuate invidious distinctions of privilege and status based upon mere accident of birth, and accentuate the spirit of pride and arrogance and of looking down upon some fellow beings with contempt, and which circumscribe the mental horizon in all respects. This idea of caste is responsible for the existing social practices of prohibition against foreign travel, inter-dining, inter-marriage, elevation of the lower classes, &c.
- 11 Ideas of idol-worship, which harbour false conceptions of God, viz that God is not One, that He has got all the idiosyncrasies of human beings; that He, like a tyrant king, enjoying all the sensual pleasures, demands bribes of vegetable or animal food in order to keep the devotee in good position, that there are different material heavens and hells for various kinds of souls, presided over by different gods and goddesses, that these should be propitiated by offerings made through a certain class of people on earth. Thus, by not presenting higher and spiritual ideals, the idolatry fetters the emancipation of the soul and narrows its horizon. A great thinker has once said, 'Show me your gods and I will show your men,' thereby meaning that our conceptions of God have much to do with our conduct in life. This is responsible for the low and barren state of the mental plane which is proof against the reception of all healthy and progressive ideas of social reform.

Whatever the apologists of the three old beliefs, who, having received liberal education, are anxious to reconcile them with the new beliefs which they imbibed by such education, may say—as, for instance, that all the Shastras are not taken to be supernatural, that the caste system is based on the good and scientific principle of 'personal magnetism', and that Idolatry is only keeping in view a concrete thing for concentration in worshipping the One True Spiritual God—the stern and incontrovertible fact remains there that all the Shastras, even the Puranas, are believed to have been written by god-inspired sages who are themselves supernatural, and whose dictates, established as the existing social customs, cannot be deliberately trampled upon without committing sin, that the caste system is not at present based on 'personal magnetism', but by mere accident of birth, and that the idolater does believe that some of the idols are the actual incarnations of God, called Archavataras¹ and not mere symbols. That there is not

one God but many, quite independent of each other, one at Trupati, the other at Chidambaram and so on;¹ that one should be worshipped on a certain day with certain leaves, that the marriage and consummation ceremonies of one God should be celebrated on a particular day, and those of the other on another day, and so on.

Thus it is evident that the above three principles or popular beliefs of undue reverence for Shastras, caste system, and idolatry, as explained above, are strongly deep-rooted in the minds of the generality of Hindus, and are offering much obstruction to the implanting of liberal social reforms in the soil of the Hindu social economy, by stunting the mental expansion of their votaries, and thus making them impervious. If any one has outgrown, at least intellectually, these three beliefs, he alone is able to understand the righteousness and necessity of the several reforms proposed. There is a truth in the statement that only education can effect social reform, thereby meaning not that the education will directly introduce reforms, but that education will shake the above foundations of the existing social practices, and thus indirectly help the educated to grasp the reforms. However vigorously the seeds of social reform are tried to be sown on the soil of the Hindu social polity it must be remembered that as long as the stones of the current popular religious beliefs are allowed to remain in the soil, so long will the effect be nil. The soil of the mental plane of the individuals must be cleared of noxious weeds and elevated with fertilizing substance, before we may expect to reap any harvest of social reforms. Such clearing and elevation can be effected by the processes of destruction and construction respectively; destruction meaning the shaking and removal of the rocky subsoil of the above three popular beliefs from their mental soil, and the construction meaning the substitution of the fertilizing soil of new healthy, and progressive principles in their stead, without which the harvest will be equally if not more disastrous. It is true that education has so far been able to do the process of destruction and shake the old beliefs, but it has not yet equally been able to do the process of construction of offering substitutes which alone can give stability and permanence to social reforms when introduced. It was this want of constructive attempt on a sufficiently large scale that is responsible for the charge often made that some of the reformers are irresponsible, irreligious, dare-devil vagabonds who, having lost all faith in the old principles, and having no substitutes for the same, have altogether abandoned all ideas of religion.

This is very incisive reasoning. Indeed, if carried one step further it would lay bare the whole truth.

¹ See below pp 324-6

• But the ordinary Hindu reformer has not realized what has taken place in his own mind. He has not noticed that, along with all other educated men and women, he has ceased to believe the doctrines which lie at the basis of the Hindu family. As we have seen, it is these beliefs that stand in the way of reform. The whole of the common people and all Hindu women, except the few who have come seriously under Western influence, are still swayed by these ideas. Educated men show that they are no longer bound by them by their advocacy of the reforms. If we look at each in turn, it will become abundantly clear that the foundation ideas of the Hindu family have already lost their hold over the mind of the educated Hindu.

First, the belief which forms the foundation stone of the whole structure, that, unless the *pinda* be regularly offered in the memorial services and the water in the daily prayers, the 'fathers' will fall from heaven and the whole family be destroyed, is no longer held by educated men. If you talk to them about the *śrāddha* ceremonies, they will at once confess that they hold no such belief, that they do not consider that idea essential, but regard these ceremonies merely as a way of expressing their very deep respect for the dead. Thus, while it is quite true that the observance of these ceremonies continues among educated men, the beliefs which created the observances have already disappeared.

Secondly, the belief in woman's essential inferiority to man is rapidly passing away. The proof that this is so lies here that educated men now repudiate or explain away the practices which are the manifestation of the belief in the Hindu family. No educated man now defends infanticide; no one defends *satī*. The feeling is the same with regard to polygamy, as we have just seen, or, if a voice is now and then tentatively raised in favour of marrying a second wife when the first proves childless, there is no conviction in the tone. Concubinage which in India used to be as common and as much recognized as in ancient Greece, is now universally condemned.

The agitation in favour of the education of girls is a further proof. Men are also steadily coming nearer a recognition of woman's right to freedom. The *zenāna* is not praised as it used to be. In this matter the attitude of the Hindu woman herself is of considerable importance. The progress made during the last ten years has been very remarkable. Finally, even those who oppose the reforms do not do so on the basis of the essential inferiority of women.

Thirdly, the belief, which underlies child-marriage, that it is sinful not to marry a girl before puberty, is dead among educated men and women. Very few educated men are now to be found who would defend child-marriage at all, although the vast majority, under the pressure of their women-folk and friends, still practise it. Yet, even if a minority among the educated defend the practice, no one now holds the belief which is the only foundation of the practice.

Fourthly, the distinctive Hindu conviction, that it is right for the widower but wrong for the widow to remarry, is also dead in educated circles. Men differ very seriously in their judgement as to what ought to be done. Some say that virgin widows should be allowed to marry if they wish to do so. Others demand that all widows should be given the option. Others, who hold that the ascetic life of the Hindu widow embodies a noble ideal and who are reluctant to give it up, urge various reasons for retaining it, especially the undoubted fact that the best Hindu women who have not come under Western influence have an intense dislike of the idea of a second union. A few have suggested that the true ideal is that neither widow nor widower should remarry. The significant fact, however, is this, that no one now holds that God's law allows remarriage in the case of widowers but not in the case of widows.

It would be quite possible to carry this farther, but it is unnecessary. There is abundant proof that the religious basis of the Hindu family is decaying among educated men. Nor can there be any doubt that it is the coming of the new

era that has produced the decay. Through all earlier revolutions whether political or religious these beliefs have persisted. Buddhism did not perceptibly modify them. Except in the case of Akbar, Muslim influence so far from waking the Indian mind in these matters, seems to have stiffened Hindu family usage all round. There is not the slightest evidence that any of the great Hindu thinkers of the past doubted these things. An occasional outburst from an atheist or from a free-lance¹ only makes the unbroken faith of the generations all the more impressive. But the forces of the new time have created an atmosphere in India in which these beliefs cannot live. Every one who enters the atmosphere loses the power to hold them.

From this point of view we can fully understand the position of the reform movement. The whole situation becomes clear when we realize that the reformers are no longer bound by the religious ideas which still hold the uneducated, and thus are ready for action, the very suggestion of which at once raises serious opposition on the part of those who are still held by them. We can also see that the contention of the more intelligent of the opposition party, that the acceptance of the reforms would be disloyalty to Hinduism, and would prove dangerous to the religion, is at least in large measure justifiable.

A most serious situation is thus disclosed. There is first the fact that the reformers and the orthodox mass stand face to face, and that it is not a social but a religious difference that divides them. But the tragic element lies here that the changes which the reformers demand are absolutely indispensable for the regeneration of India, and yet they cannot be carried out without abandoning the religious foundation of the Hindu family. The reformers have not realized what they were doing. It is probably the very word 'reform' that has misled them. They have all along imagined they were recalling the original form of the Hindu family, while, as a matter of

¹ *Heart of India* 100 112.

fact, what they have been seeking to reach is an altogether new structure. They are right in stating that the reforms are absolutely essential; their opponents are right in saying that these new proposals are alien and hostile to the Hindu family.

Thus the only satisfactory solution of the difficulty is the disappearance of the old beliefs. Every true patriot must wish to see them pass away, for, until they pass away, the reforms cannot be heartily welcomed by the people. Mr. Śrinivāsa Rao comes very near the truth here.¹

But we may go farther and recognize that disbelief of these things is bound to spread. No one can now stay the progress of Western education in India. It is not Britain that imposes it on the Indian spirit. The example of Japan and of China in this regard is final and conclusive. India must have Western education, and wherever that goes, belief in the potency of the *pinda*, in the essential inferiority of women, in the duty of marrying a girl before puberty and in the sinfulness of widow-remarriage, melts away like snow under a rise of temperature. The only questions are, how soon, and under what agency, the change will take place.

IV But a much more serious consideration has now to be faced. If the old beliefs are decaying and are certain to pass away, what is to be put in their place? The chief lesson taught by our study of the Hindu family is this, that every element in it rests on a religious basis. The same thing will be found true of every other form of family organization on the face of the earth. All are religious. Innumerable forms of organization were tried by our ancestors; and we have amongst us to-day only those that have succeeded in surviving. It is surely a truth of vast significance that every single surviving form is religious from top to bottom. Thus the thoughtful man will not attempt to rebuild the family of any nation without a foundation of religion.

'But have not the reform party been attempting to do so consciously or unconsciously? They have steadily worked in opposition to Hindu family beliefs, but have proposed no new group of ideas to take their place. In many Hindu families the difficulty is seriously felt to-day. The emancipated son rebels against his father's authority. The daughter-in-law, having got a little education, believes she has rights of freedom and refuses to obey her mother-in-law. That is the new spirit uncontrolled by religion. The new wine of liberty needs new bottles to contain it.

The founder of the Ārya Samāj consciously attempted to rebuild the family on a religious foundation; but he used only materials provided by the Vedas, so that the attempt was foredoomed to failure. Already his own followers are making haste to repudiate one of his institutions, viz *nivoga*, a form of temporary marriage which in his system is permissible for widows and widowers, and even for others.

What is needed is a strong, simple, religious doctrine which even the child and the illiterate woman can understand, a doctrine which will make the needed reforms inevitable, once it is understood and believed, and yet will at the same time place men, women, and children in the family under such clear religious obligations that individual liberty shall be restrained and the unity and purity of the family secured. Unity, purity, discipline, peace were secured in the far-away times for the Hindu family by the religious beliefs which are now crumbling to dust. Something of equal power but suited to modern times must be found now, else the modern Hindu family can never rise in beauty and power.

Mr Justice Ranade had some inkling of this truth many years ago and gave expression to it:

Our deliberate conviction, however, has grown upon us with every effort, that it is only a religious revival that can furnish sufficient moral strength to work out the complex social problems which demand our attention. Mere considerations of expediency or economical calculations of gains and losses can never move a community to undertake and

carry through social reforms, especially with a community like ours, so spell-bound by custom and authority. Our people feel, and feel earnestly, that some of our social customs are fraught with evil, but as this evil is of a temporal character, they think it does not justify a breach of commands divine, for such breach involves a higher penalty. The truth is that orthodox society has lost its power of life, it can initiate no reform nor sympathize with it. Only a religious revival, a revival not of forms, but of sincere earnestness, which constitutes true religion, can effect the desired end.¹

Others² have said something similar more recently, but there has been no clear perception of the crucial fact that what is required is a group of fresh religious beliefs fit to form the foundation of the new family life desired by the reformers.

We have already noticed that the whole reform movement arises from the Western atmosphere now influencing India so deeply. It lays hold with strength only on those who have had a Western education. But we come nearer the real source when we note that these powerful ideas came in the first instance directly to Rām Mohan Rai and the other Brāhma leaders from Christian sources. We do not, however, reach the full truth until we recognize that every principle that controls the movement springs from Christ Himself, but, as that will become apparent at once to every one who will give careful attention to the work of the reformers, we need say no more about it. Since then, Christ has inspired the movement so completely,³ we shall do well to ask whether He does not also supply the ideas needed to provide the religious foundation for the new structure which we see taking shape before our eyes. What does He say about the basis of the family? In seeking to reach the answer to this question, we must begin with the fundamental principles of Christ, in accordance with what is brought out in the Introduction.⁴

¹ Quoted in *I. S. R.*, Sept. 8, 1912, p. 16.

² e.g. Mr. Justice Sadāsna Iyer in *I. S. R.*, June 2, 1912, and Mr. V. Srinivāsa Rao in *I. S. R.*, Sept. 8 and 22, 1912.

³ See Ranade's *Essays*, 23, Sastri's *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, 1

• It may be well, at the very outset, to say a word about a point frequently raised in Indian journals. When Christian teaching is offered as the solution of the problem of the Hindu family, Hindus are accustomed to object that the sexual immorality and the divorce of the West are as bad as anything found in India. We would ask our readers to recognize, on the one hand, that in addition to all the injustice and weakness produced by its unhealthy family system, India suffers quite as much from sexual vice as Europe does, and, on the other, that such facts, even if they were more serious than they are, would not prove that the teaching of Christ on family questions does not form the final basis of healthy family life for all men. The ignorance of multitudes of people in the slums of European cities is no proof that Western education is unnecessary or unhealthy, and the millions of people who in many parts of the world live unsanitary lives do not constitute a disproof of the value of hygiene. Like Hinduism, Christianity must be judged by its principles, not by the vicious lives of those who refuse to obey it.

We turn, then, to the teaching of Christ.

A. The central message of Christianity is the Fatherhood of God. The word father has been applied to the divine Being in almost every land, but with great variety of meaning and feeling. In primitive religions it is quite common in the sense of physical parent. The savage believes that his clan is descended from his god. In much higher faiths, where a spiritual conception of God already obtains, He is called Father, as being the Creator, the Sustainer, and the loving Benefactor of His creatures. The word in that case is used metaphorically, just as it is when a king is called the father of his people. Such a use of the word 'father' implies nothing as to what man's nature is.

But Christ's conception of the divine Fatherhood is something quite different. To Him the Fatherhood is a personal relation between the supreme Spirit and every human being

Three distinct yet closely related elements are contained in it. First, God created man in His own image, so that the spirit of man is a finite copy of the infinite Spirit. Man's spiritual nature, though finite and weak, is built on the same lines as the nature of God Himself. That which makes a man a man is likeness to God. Secondly, God made man like Himself, so that he might be fit for the immediate, personal, spiritual intercourse of a son with his Heavenly Father. The essence of humanity is thus spiritual kinship to God. Thirdly, having created man in His own image with a view to sonship, God loves every human being with the tender love of a father. Thus, God's relation to every individual human soul is truly that of Father, and nothing can ever break that bond or change the Father's heart. Every man, woman, and child has the priceless dignity of a child of the Supreme.

Since, then, man's nature and origin are such, we can see that every human being is of priceless value, both to himself and to God. Jesus said,

For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?¹

Our kinship to God also fills us with infinite potentialities. Wrapped up in every human soul there are possibilities of moral and spiritual growth beyond our calculation. Christ's command is:

Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.²

Man's responsibilities are as great as his value and his dignity. Each of us will have to stand before the divine judgement-seat and give an account of his life. Jesus says,

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds.³

¹ Matt. 16 26

² Mat 5 48

³ Matt. 16 27

*1. From these quotations it will be clear that to Jesus the implications of the Fatherhood are so great that in the light of that truth, all matters of sex, physique, birth, position, wealth, education, civilization, dwindle to nothing, and every human being is seen to be to God a child of priceless worth. Women are different from men, mentally as well as physically, yet they are as precious, as divine, as noble as men are, and as fully responsible to God. Woman's relationship to her Heavenly Father, and her mode of access to His heart, are the same as man's.

Only from this point of view can we understand the way in which Jesus spoke of women and dealt with them. They hold quite as high a place in His thought and in the Kingdom of God as men do. A woman who does God's will is Christ's sister, just as a faithful man is His brother.

For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.¹

The Jews had not fully grasped the truth of woman's spiritual dignity, and she never received among them the same place as man. The disciples were astonished to find Jesus talking at Jacob's well with a woman,² and He had to defend Mary for sitting at His feet hearing His word.³ It was His deep consciousness that a woman's spiritual dignity is as great as a man's that roused Him to indignation against the injustice of Jewish divorce.⁴

It was because Jesus received women as children of God, infinitely dear to the Father, that they crowded round Him, listening to His words, and turning away from the evil of their past lives. Therefore did the poor unfortunate stand behind Him, weeping in an agony of repentance,⁵ and Mary poured the costly spikenard on His head,⁶ and the Syro-Phoenician mother had courage to plead for her daughter,⁷

¹ Mark 3, 35

⁴ Mark 10, 1-12.

⁷ Ma 15 21 28

² John 4, 27

⁶ Luke 7, 36-50.

³ Luke 10, 38-43

⁶ Matt. 26, 6, 7.

and Joanna and the other women ministered to Him,* stood round His cross,² and were the first to see the empty tomb³ and to hear the Easter message.¹

To one holding this high estimate of woman monogamy is the only type of marriage possible. "Woman, being as noble and as precious a creature as man, enters on marriage as a full personality, and on equal terms. Her husband is wholly her own, as she is wholly his. So, when Christ deals with marriage, He says,

Have ye not read, that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the twain shall become one flesh? So that they are no more twain, but one flesh.⁵

Clearly, there cannot be three or four in this unity. Manifestly then in the doctrine that woman is a child of God as truly as man, an immovable religious foundation is laid for monogamy. The loose ideas which leave a Hindu free to marry a second, or even a third, wife while his first wife lives are altogether inconsistent with the Fatherhood of God. Polygamy places woman on an altogether different plane from man, while, in fact, she is as truly of infinite value as he is.

This principle of woman's spiritual equality with man will be found to be the secret of health in other aspects of family life also. Since woman is as precious as man, a girl has the same right to education that her brother has, widows and widowers then stand absolutely on an equality; and, in considering the right age for marriage, as much care must be given to considerations of the welfare of the wife as of the husband. The realization of the true dignity of woman makes the Hindu rule, that a husband must not eat with his wife, seem very unworthy, and, if woman is as noble a creature as man, why should she be shut up in a zenāna, if a man

¹ Luke 8 1-3.

² Luke 23 49 Mark 15 40

³ Mark 16 1

Mark 16 6

Mat 19 4 6.

is allowed his liberty? The principle of spiritual equality also demands that there shall be something like equality between a wife and her husband in age, in education, in culture, so that they may be fit companions for each other, that they may join harmoniously in bearing the strain of family life and may be equally ready to influence the children for good. This lofty principle thus raises a wife to her true place beside her husband, and releases the incalculable riches which he hid in the heart, the will, and the intellect of woman, but can never be used so long as she is crushed down and refused the liberty which is her birthright.

2. The truth that every human being is a child of God, beloved and priceless, is as fruitful with regard to children. How very deeply Jesus felt the preciousness of a little child comes out clearly in the following words.

Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me but whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.¹

But to this pricelessness of the child Jesus adds another thought, that in their innocence and humility children are patterns to us of those who win the kingdom of heaven. These are the spiritual truths which lie behind the heart-moving scene:

And they brought unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.²

Was it any wonder that the children loved Him?—He rode into Jerusalem, meek and lowly, upon an ass, cleansed the Temple of its profaning buyers and sellers, and there, in His

Father's house, while He healed the blind and the lame, the little ones stood round Him singing,

Hosanna to the Son of David¹

Thus, if we accept the divine Fatherhood, it is impossible to make an invidious distinction between boys and girls. Both must receive the very best training their parents can give them, secular, moral, and religious, in order that they may grow up to be worthy sons and daughters of God. The most serious responsibility lies on the father and the mother to train their children in the knowledge and the love of God, their Father.

The doctrine of the divine Fatherhood makes human fatherhood doubly sacred and worthy of honour. A true son cannot but love and venerate his father and mother all his life, and if at any time, whether through sorrow, sickness, or poverty, they require to be helped it will be his greatest joy to come to their aid. Christ laid great emphasis on this duty and privilege.²

Necessarily, Christ's principle leads to the duty of complete obedience to parents on the part of children. He quoted with weighty emphasis the law,

Honour thy father and thy mother.³

But, when children grow up and become men and women, then wise parents will no longer lay commands upon their sons and daughters, nor expect implicit obedience from them, for the grown-up child bears the same relation to God that his father does, and is as responsible to God for his actions. In almost every instance, it is true, the son would have no hesitation in obeying his father, but it is the father's duty to seek to develop his son's independence rather than to attempt to keep him in a state of pupillage, so that he ought not to exact obedience. There is then a further possibility which must not be lost sight of, the father may order the son to do

¹ Matt. 21: 15

² Mark 7: 9-3

³ Matt. 15: 4

something morally wrong, or may forbid him to do something which the son believes he ought to do. There is the case of the criminal tribes referred to above.¹ Christ, by both example and precept, taught that in these circumstances it is the son's duty to disobey. When His own mother sought to restrain Him from His work, He gently refused to be driven from His life-task.

And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him, for they said, He is beside himself. . . . And there come his mother and his brethren, and, standing without, they sent unto him, calling him. And a multitude was sitting about him, and they say unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answereth them, and saith, Who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round on them which sat round about him, he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister, and mother.²

A young man, whom Christ had urged to follow Him, stated, seemingly, that his father was opposed to his doing so, but that he would certainly obey after his father's death. Jesus told him that it was his duty to obey at once:

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But he said unto him, I leave the dead to bury their own dead, but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God.³

B Jesus taught very distinctly that the children of God are free. The clearest piece of teaching occurs with reference to the payment of a religious tax:

And when they were come to Capernaum, they, that received the half-shekel came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay the half-shekel? He saith, Yea. And when he came into the house, Jesus spake first to him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers? And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said unto him, Therefore the sons are free.⁴

¹ p 88.

² Mark 3, 21, 31-35
Mat 17 4 6

³ Luke 9, 59, 60.

But the principle holds good throughout. The only ultimate authority in the life of children of God is their Heavenly Father. No one has any right to bind them. Men and women must therefore be left free to marry or to abstain from marriage as they think best. It is clear that most people are better married; but some are better unmarried. The Christian principle does not command a widow to marry a second time, far from it, but it does leave her free to consider her own duty in the light of God's truth in this matter. No man has any right to forbid her to marry, if she wishes to do so. The children of God must be left free.

C. Jesus teaches us that marriage is a divine institution in which a man and a woman are united to each other more closely than they are to their own parents. We quote once more His words:

He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the twain shall become one flesh.¹

His conduct fully corresponds with His words. Invited to a wedding, He graced the occasion with His presence, and shared in its joy.² At another time He vindicated most forcibly the sacredness of the marriage bond,³ and immediately thereafter took little children in His arms and blessed them, at the request of their mothers.⁴

1. Thus, to Christ, marriage is a most sacred thing, devised by God for our human help. Married life is in itself a perfectly pure relationship. The fact that it is necessary for the continuance of the human family ought to be sufficient to convince us that it is in accordance with God's will. It is the abuse of the sexual relationship which has filled the minds of multitudes of good men with suspicions of married life. Men and women have abused marriage to such an extent that multitudes have come to look upon it as merely a means

¹ Mat. 19: 4-5

² John 2

³ Mark 10: 13-16

⁴ Mark 10: 12

for the gratification of passion. When so regarded, marriage is certainly degrading, irreligious, altogether unfit for the spiritual man. But when husband and wife enter upon it in the right spirit, and live together in prayerfulness and love of God, marriage is holy, and the family becomes a fountain of the purest joys and the most spiritual training for parents as well as for children.

2. Since marriage has these high ends in view, clearly a man and a woman ought not to marry, unless they are truly suited for each other, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Personal fitness is the one test which ought to be used in the selection of a woman for one's wife, or of a man for one's husband. But under that head how many things come! For the same reason child-marriage ought not to be tolerated. A child is not prepared for married life at all. body, mind, and heart are still immature, unready for the high tasks of marriage. On the other hand, no age can be fixed on as the right age of marriage for all. Some ripen much earlier than others, some need its help much earlier than others; some had better not marry at all. In thinking of these questions we ought not to neglect the guidance afforded by the experience of the human race, and of all that science teaches us as to the development of the human body and the time when men and women may most prudently mate.

3. This high conviction that marriage is a divine institution necessarily leads to that law which Christ expresses so clearly that marriage should be dissolved only by death. Christ's words are

What God hath joined let not man sunder.¹

Here, as elsewhere, He tells us our religious duty, but does not give us detailed legislation. No definite law of divorce can be drawn from the teaching of Jesus. What He does is to teach every husband and every wife to be absolutely faithful until parted by death.

4. The same principle gives us the Christian point of view, that there must be no sexual indulgence of any kind outside marriage. Every sexual act outside the marriage bond is a sin against our 'high dignity' as children of God, and is a deadly enemy to the spiritual life¹. Complete chastity is demanded of every unmarried person, precisely as complete truthfulness and justice are demanded. The rule proves its own rectitude by its splendid simplicity. Here we have no meritorious vow of chastity undertaken for a limited period, but an absolute law which knows no exception.

Modern inquiries have shown how natural and how healthy complete chastity is for the young. No young man or young woman, if properly trained ought to find any serious difficulty in maintaining perfect chastity. There is no physiological reason for uncleanness. Nature and health both woo the young to purity. It is not natural but perverted instincts that lead us astray. We may go farther. Both biology and psychology prove the very great importance of the period of adolescence in our lives. The growth of the aesthetic faculty, the natural expansion of the emotions, the healthy advance of the intellect, and the spontaneous ripening of religious aspiration and feeling, all depend in a very large degree upon a healthy youth. The most precious fruits of this golden time cannot be gathered, unless chastity be preserved. The nobler aspects of manhood and womanhood arise largely as the result of the restraining of the sexual and emotional nature in the years immediately after puberty². This is one of the great laws which the ancient Hindus were ignorant of. If they had known it, they would have never laid down the law that a girl ought to be married before puberty.

D. Marriage is a thing of this life only. There is no marriage in heaven. Christ's words are .

Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For

¹ Matt 15, 19, 20.

² See Stanley Hall's *Adol* :

* in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven¹

Most religions have failed to conceive heaven in a truly spiritual way. They have thought of it, as the Red Indians did, as a repetition of this life only with the sorrows of earth eliminated, and the company of the gods added. Such is the picture of heaven in the *Rigveda*, and such the idea remains throughout Hindu and Buddhist literature. In most countries a man is believed to rejoin his wife in heaven, it being impossible to imagine heaven as like this earth without the inclusion of marriage. The gods themselves marry and beget children.² In some religions, as for example Islam, sexual enjoyment is made one of the chief attractions of heaven. It is surely unnecessary to point out at this date that all such ideas of heaven make it impossible for any thinking man to believe in such a thing. The life of heaven is spiritual, or there is no such life at all. Christ made no such mistake. He knew too well how different the spiritual world is from this natural world, so He told men frankly that there is no marriage in heaven.

Since this is so, the reason given for not allowing Hindu widows to marry falls to the ground. Whether a man or a woman ought to marry a second time or not must be settled in accordance with personal character and circumstances. In many cases a second marriage is best. In others perpetual widowhood is the only right thing to look forward to. The Hindu wife refuses to think of a second marriage in order that she may have her own place beside her lord in heaven. The realization of the deep difference between this earth and the spiritual world makes such an idea incongruous. We shall know and love each other in heaven, but the old physical relationships will no longer obtain. Like all the best things of earth, married love will be raised to something better in heaven.

¹ Mat. 22:9-30.

² See below pp. 297-298.

E. Every one will realize what a strong religious foundation for family life this is which Christ lays down. The chief stone is the Fatherhood of God, which gives us the great truths of the priceless value and peerless dignity of every human soul, the spiritual equality of man and woman, and the essential freedom of every child of God. The second stone is this, that marriage is in accordance with the will of our Father, and therefore a sacred thing, a perfectly pure relationship, the only relationship in which sexual relations are moral, a bond dissoluble only by death. The third foundation stone is the truth that marriage is a thing of this world only, that there is no marriage in the spiritual world.

It will also be plain how perfectly these principles of Christ are fitted to form the religious foundation of the family which the Hindu reformers are seeking to build. The Fatherhood of God takes the place of the old-world belief that the 'fathers' guard the family, and creates the religion of the family, the spiritual equality of man and woman as children of the Father is precisely the law wanted to justify the four reforms, viz. a later marriage age for girls, education for girls, the possibility of remarriage for widows, and full monogamy for all, and the inviolable sacredness of the marriage union, which arises from its origin in God, gives family life that religious sanctity without which it cannot hold the heart and bind the conscience.

If these powerful truths were taught to the Hindu people, they would form such a basis of reliable conviction in their minds that it would soon become possible to begin introducing the much-desired reforms in a gradual way. There would then be no wounding of consciences and no serious dislocation of society. While women and girls would gradually be given greater freedom, independence, and knowledge, these new and somewhat dangerous gifts would be preceded, accompanied, and surrounded by the powerful religious truths of their personal relation and complete responsibility to their heavenly Father for every privilege and their most weighty obligations.

to father, mother, sister, brother, husband, child, and every other relative.

The policy at present pursued by the party of reform is fraught with most serious danger on two sides. That policy is, introduce the reforms as rapidly as possible but let Hindu teaching and practice go on unchanged. On the one hand then, children and young people are to grow up under the influence of the funeral and śrāddha ceremonies, the family sacraments, the various observances of home and temple worship, the ancient mythology and the teaching of gurus, priests, and the women of the family. It will be necessary to explain the ceremonies to them, so that in their most impressionable years their minds will be filled with belief in the value of the pinda to the souls of their dead relatives, while the gods mentioned in the ritual of the sacraments will necessarily seem to them to have power over family life. They will be taught that all women are of sinful birth, i. e. that they are born as women because of sin in a former life, that parents are guilty of serious sin, unless they marry their daughters before puberty, and that a widow has an impure heart and sinful desires if she ever dream of a second marriage. Are these healthy influences for young people living in a reformed family?

On the other hand, they will be placed in the enjoyment of new liberties and in relationships not contemplated in the Hindu system, and yet no fresh religious obligations will have been created in their minds to prevent liberty from becoming licence, and to guide them in the unfamiliar circumstances of their new life. How many unsympathetic sons and revolted daughters-in-law will this policy necessarily breed, how many foolish actions and how many uncontrolled minds! Who can believe that such a policy is healthy?

V. But the most wonderful thing remains yet to be noted. The leaven of Christ, entering into the moral and intellectual life of India has made the old beliefs on which the family is founded altogether incredible and has roused the leaders of

the Hindu people to an earnest campaign for the evolution of a new and stronger family, so that at first sight Christ seems to be antagonistic to *Hindu thought and Hindu institutions*. Yet, when we examine the master-lines of the family which He bids us build, we find, to our astonishment, that in it all the noblest ideals of the Hindu family reappear, but in completed form while all that is unworthy and unhealthy has passed away. Christ thus crowns the Hindu family with a structure which is new, yet is in no sense alien, but is the natural consummation of the older and less perfect system. The following points are of the utmost interest:

(a) The sacred character which invests every aspect of Hindu family life is deepened by Christ, for He taught, not only that marriage and the family are institutions framed by the hand of God, but that God is the Father of all men, so that every human family is a miniature reflex of the family of God and every home is meant to be a picture and a foretaste of heaven. Jesus revealed the heart of our Father towards the family when He took the little children in His arms and blessed them.

(b) Monogamy, which has always been the law for Hindu women, is the Christian law for men as well as women.

(c) The high ideal of loyalty and chastity which is set before the Hindu wife is demanded in Christianity of the husband as well as the wife.

(d) The lofty dignity of the Hindu husband and father is confirmed by Christ, but is conferred upon the wife and mother as well.

(e) Christ bids us treasure both sons and daughters as Hindu parents have been accustomed to treasure sons.

(f) In ancient India, education, religious and general, was the right of every boy of the twice-born castes. In Christianity, it is the right of every boy and every girl of whatever race or social position.

(g) The chastity which was so wisely demanded of the Hindu adolescent while a student is laid upon all adolescents

without exception by Christian principle. The Christian law is that every unmarried person must observe complete chastity, and that, taken along with the Christian rule that only adults must marry, lays chastity upon every adolescent.

Thus the present weakness and unhealthiness of the Hindu family find their one remedy in the principles of Christ. The divine truths concerning man and woman which He revealed are needed to raise its best customs to their height, to universalize its highest laws, and to correct its glaring abuses. Christ will transfigure the Hindu family to glory.

CHAPTER III

THE ETERNAL MORAL ORDER

WE have seen what the religious system of the Aryans was when they entered India. Centuries later, when they were engaged in the imperial work of bringing all the peoples of North India under their political and intellectual domination the great doctrine of karma and rebirth took shape. On the surface it appears to be essentially a doctrine of life and death, but we shall not be able to understand it unless we see that it is at bottom a theory of morality. The time was a period of serious reflection. It gave birth to the reasoned doctrine of the existence of the one unknowable God behind all the gods as well as the belief in transmigration.

I. We can see only in part what the origin of the doctrine was. The *outer* elements of the situation are not very clear. We can see that the time was the period of Aryan expansion over North India; and it seems certain that it was in the great intellectual activity provoked by the intercourse of the living Aryan mind with the many varied peoples of North India that the great theory was formed; but the few scraps of evidence which the literature affords us are not nearly sufficient to show how the conceptions were built up nor whence the various elements came. In the Brāhmanas we meet several fresh ideas on questions of eschatology. The old firm faith in a happy immortality spent with the gods and the 'fathers' has begun to give place to *chilling fears* about its being possible to die over and over again in the other world, and hell has become a more serious reality; but there is no hint of rebirth in this world and there is no doctrine of karma

It is certain that, among the many animistic tribes the invaders met on the broad plains of the North, there must have been some who held the common primitive belief that the souls of men may become incarnate in animals. There were probably totemistic clans who believed that at death a man became, like his totem, a tiger, an ox, a frog, or a snake. Whether the transmigration idea came from this source or not, it is impossible to say. But even if the idea that human souls might undergo animal births came from the aborigines, that is but one element in the complex doctrine. That which gave the belief its power over the intellect, and also its value for the moral life, was the connexion of this fairy-tale idea with the powerful ethical conception of retribution; and we may be certain that that was the work of the Aryan mind. This seems to follow from the fact, which stands out clear in the literature where the doctrine first appears (viz. the earliest Upanishads), that it was among the cultured Aryans that the doctrine was first believed and taught. Educated men accepted it first; and it was then brought to the common people by the Brāhmans in the course of centuries of instruction. Even apart from this piece of evidence, one would be inclined to suspect that the idea of transmigration was borrowed from some primitive source, but that the conception of karma was thought out by the Aryans; for, while transmigration has been believed in many lands, the Hindu doctrine of karma is unique.¹

The *inner* elements that went to the creation of the belief may be partly made out, but even they are far from clear. The fundamental thought clearly is the common human conviction that the heart of the world is just, that our lives are subject to moral law, and that both good and evil actions will receive a perfectly just recompense. The form which this conviction takes in the doctrine is that all the good and all the evil actions done in one life will be recompensed with an equivalent amount of happiness or misery in a later

life; but how the Indo-Aryans reached this particular combination of ideas, we do not know. It is easy to conjecture that the original form of the belief was that each man receives *in this life* the exactly measured recompense of his good and bad deeds in happiness and misery. There are a few incidents in the literature which would fit well into the conjecture. For example, when Daśaratha is compelled to drive his beloved son Rāma into exile, he recalls in his misery that, while out hunting as a young man, he rashly shot an arrow and thereby killed a young lad, the only son of hermit parents, and he concludes that the loss of his own son is the "punishment for that rash act". Here we have a sinful act punished in the same life in which it was done. This theory, that a man's health and fortune in this life are the recompense of his deeds has been held by many other early peoples, notably by early Israel. But facts are too stubborn for such a theory: clearly it is not true. The stage in Israel's history when the old belief became incredible comes vividly before us in the Book of Job. We may conjecture that at the time when the transmigration theory came to the notice of the Indo-Aryans, they had by experience found the theory of material recompense in this life untenable, and that they seized on the idea of transmigration as a means of solving the problem. But all this is but conjecture. We know only that in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* and *Chhāndogya Upanishads* a few of the more advanced men teach, as a new and precious truth, the doctrine that as a man sows in this life he will reap in another.

From these passages it seems clear that the doctrine was first thought out and stated with reference to the future, and that it was some little time before reflection led to the further thought, that a man's present circumstances and experience are the recompense of his behaviour in past lives. Then this train of thought, carried farther both backward and forward,

would inevitably lead to the conclusion that the series of lives can have neither beginning nor end

A definition of terms may be useful at this point :

The doctrine of *transmigration* is that souls are emanations of the divine spirit, sparks from the central fire, drops from the ocean of divinity, that each soul is incarnated in a body times without number; that the same soul may be in one life a god, in another a man in a third an animal, or even a plant, and that the series of births and deaths goes on in a never-ending cycle, the soul finding no rest nor relief from suffering, unless it finds some means of release from the necessity of rebirth and returns to the divine source whence it came.

The word *karma* means literally action, but in the doctrine means the inevitable working out of action in new life. The idea is that a man's body, character, capacities, and temperament, his birth, wealth, and station, and the whole of his experience in life, whether of happiness or of sorrow, together form the just recompense for his deeds, good and bad, done in earlier existences. Every act necessarily works itself out in retribution in another birth. The expiation works itself out not only in the man's passive experience (*bhoktṛitvam*) but in his actions also (*kartr̥itvam*). Then these new actions form new *karma*, which must necessarily be expiated in another existence; so that, as fast as the clock of retribution runs down, it winds itself up again, as Deussen remarks. The soul is also affected by its own acts. Every good action ennobles it in some degree and helps to loosen the grip of the sense-world, while every bad action degrades it and gives the world a greater hold, so that the man who persists in right action makes steady progress towards perfection, while continued vice plunges the soul in corruption ever deeper. No man reaches complete soul-health until he has spent many lives in strenuous well-doing.¹

¹ The concept of inaction is not dealt with here: it arose only when men began seriously to seek immediate emancipation. It is dealt with below p 138.

In ancient times, as now, the transmigration theory was held in high honour because of the explanation which it gives of the appalling differences in human life. Is a man born blind, or deaf, or deformed? It is the result of *karma*. Does a man rise to imperial power and boundless riches? It is the result of *karma*. Every variation in natural capacity, in physical strength, in hereditary character, in social position, in wealth, in good fortune, is put down as the scrupulously measured requital of previous deeds. We thus get a seemingly satisfactory explanation of the extreme differences in the lot of men. Is God partial, that He should make one man a philosopher, a king, or a millionaire, another an idiot, a monster, or a sickly weakling? Thus thought more than any other accounts for the popularity of the doctrine.

To the Western man the theory is more noteworthy because of the wide sweep of its moral conceptions, the belief that every happening in the world is the outcome of some ethical act, and the idea that the perfecting of a soul is the work of many myriads of years and of uncounted lives. So hard a thing does the upward struggle seem to Hindu thought. Certainly the doctrine does not belittle the place of morals in human life, nor the difficulty of overcoming the world.

When reflection had made some progress, men began to regard these many lives as most undesirable, and to long for emancipation from the necessity of rebirth. When this unexpected change occurred, men began to deplore their own good deeds, because they led to rebirth as surely as their evil deeds, so, that which originally was the highest possible reward became hated.

II. To the careful student the most interesting aspect of this doctrine is the altogether immeasurable influence it has exercised on both the beliefs and the practices of Hinduism. It is not only the theory of the life of the soul, and the standing rule for the elucidation of every calamity, but is the explanation of all the phenomena of the natural world, the justification of the caste system and the reason why men

obey the laws of caste, the family and religion. Above all it was the source of the pessimism of India, and that, in turn, created the whole philosophic movement. We shall probably understand its bearing on the religion best if we consider it in connexion with the world, souls, and God.

A *The world* is the realm of karma. The unending procession of unnumbered souls constantly passing through birth and death as plants, animals, men, demons or gods, is held to be not only the explanation of human sorrow, joy, and character, but of all that happens in the material world. Everything that is visible is the outworking of the action of the whole vast assembly of invisible souls. Karma is the law of the phenomenal world. Several results necessarily arise

1. As every occurrence in the world is the effect of foregoing action, and as every action is followed by its retributive expression, it is clear that the process can have had no beginning and will have no end. *Samsāra*, as the process is called, is eternal. Hence the world is eternal, a constant concomitant of God. Human life it is believed, with all its sorrow and sin, will go on for ever. Other elements of the system fit well into this idea. As karma is the moral system, it is necessarily conceived as eternal. As in each life a man's character and condition are the outcome of previous action, while his actions will inevitably lead to new life, the process can have had no beginning and will have no end. The soul is thus eternal, as eternal as God.

2. The world, though eternal, is completely dominated by karma. It is thus in every aspect transitory, and ever filled with birth and death, sorrow and suffering. Every soul in the universe is in bonds, chained by karma to birth and death, to pleasure and pain.

3. The process of retribution is so exhausting and the action of souls so disturbing that the world steadily degenerates. The age of full virtue (*kṛta yuga*) inevitably passes into the age of three-fourths of good (*tretā yuga*), that into the half and half time *dvapara yuga* and that into the

age when only one-fourth of good survives (*kali yuga*). Thus, decline is the only possibility in worldly affairs. Progress is for ever impossible. We are now in the last evil age, hastening on to hopeless depravity.

4. The Hindu belief in the periodic dissolution and re-formation of the world is a reflection of the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. The idea is that the whole phenomenal universe, after having degenerated through the four ages, passes into a formless, invisible, elemental state; souls leave their bodies, and elemental matter and souls repose in peace until the moment comes for a new manifestation. Then matter begins once more to evolve, inorganic things, plants, animals, men, demons, and gods come into being; the process of transmigration begins precisely where it left off; the castes are re-formed, the *rishis* see the Vedas, and the world comes to be as it was before. The period between formation and dissolution is called a *kalpa*, the period of repose a *pralaya*. Thus, the Hindu conception of the course of the world is an endless series of alternating periods of activity and rest. These changes result in neither progress nor decline, for the world is always the same at the beginning of each period of activity. Self-repetition is thus the characteristic of the process and not evolution. The one end of the whole process is retribution: there is no world-purpose to be worked out.

5. We turn next to caste. The Hindu believes that his caste is determined by his past life. Each man is born into that caste for which his former actions have prepared him.¹ If his former lives have been exceedingly good, so that he has become a truly spiritual soul, he is born a *Brāhman*.² If he is a step lower in spirituality, he is born a *Kshatriya*,³ and so on. It is this that distinguishes the Hindu social order from every similar system that has existed in the world: a man's position in the social scale is held to be a clear index of the state of his soul.

¹ *Chhândogya U* v. 10. 7

² See p. 63

"Thus, each Hindu is believed to bring with him into the world a certain accumulated store of spirituality which is the sole reason for his having been born into the caste to which he belongs. His caste-standing in future lives will then depend upon his behaviour during his present life. The caste into which he has been born is believed to form the one situation in which his soul can make true progress. Hence, he cannot form good karma unless he live as a loyal member of his caste, keeping all the traditional rules with complete faithfulness and fulfilling all his other obligations as a good Hindu.¹ These are in the main his family duties and his duties to the gods. A fuller account of all that is binding on Hindus will be given in Chapter V.² Here it is of importance simply to note that the doctrine of rebirth and karma reinforced the old religious sanctions of these duties by teaching that neglect of any duty ordained in Scripture would ripen to calamity and misery afterwards.

6 As all of joy or sorrow that happens to a man is the outcome of his karma, every calamity is set down as the direct result of some evil action in a former life. Thus when, through the machinations of Kaikeyī, Rāma, the eldest son of Daśaratha, king of Ayodhyā, is driven into exile, he thinks of his mother Kausalyā's grief and says

Sure in some antenatal time
We're children by Kausalyā's crime
Torn from their mother's arms away,
And hence she mourns this evil day.³

In ordinary Hindu society, when a man dies, his widow is told that, if she had not sinned in a former life, he would not have died. Nay, the dogma goes farther still: the calamity of being born a woman is the punishment of sin.⁴

The same doctrine of calamity is used to explain the degraded and downtrodden position of the Outcaste tribes.⁵ a man who lives a foul life, according to all Hindu authorities,

¹ Cf. 1. 2. 25

See also c 1. 9

² pp. 217-218.

³ Griffith. II. 111.

⁴ See p. 16

is born a dog, a hog, or a Chandāla,¹ i.e. an Outcaste. The birth of other men as foreigners is explained on the same lines.² Consequently, Hindu compassion was not drawn out towards these wretched people living in their midst. They were the criminals of the universe undergoing a life-term of punishment. Who would waste pity on them? One might as well pity the soul that is born a worm or a beetle!

But the belief went still farther. Since the sufferings of these people were the justly measured requital of their past sins, no power on earth could save them from any part of their misery. Their karma was working itself out and would inevitably do so. Thus, Hindus not only shared the common conviction of the ancient world, that degraded tribes were like animals and could not be civilized. Their highest moral doctrine taught them that it was useless to attempt to help them in the slightest; for nothing could prevent their karma from bringing upon them their full tale of misery. Here is a very illuminating incident.

Let me record another instance—It occurred at Madras during one of my visits there. One morning, as I was engaged in my studies in my lodgings, news was brought me that a remarkable Hindu widow had come with a peculiar mission to the house of a friend of mine. I went to the place to meet her. When there I found a young woman, a widow and an ascetic, majestically seated like a devotee and singing a Tamil song. They told me it was a psalm in praise of her deity. As she was singing with her hand on her little stringed instrument, big tear-drops were trickling down her cheeks. The psalm over, I began conversation with her through an interpreter. Her whole history was this—she belonged to a respectable middle-class family; after her widowhood she took the vow of attaching herself as a maid-servant to the Temple of Tirupati. She was still attached to that temple, and on that occasion had come to Madras to collect funds to give a new set of jewellery to her god. My mind at that time was being seriously exercised by the case of a number of famine orphans whom I had met in the streets. I opened to her the proposal of starting a shelter and an orphanage for these children, and asked her if she could be a mother to them. My proposal fell flat upon her mind. She did not look upon

¹ *Chhândogya Upanishad* v 10 7

² See p 164.

it as a religious act. As far as I remember, she observed, 'What have I to do with these children who have lost caste by taking food at the hands of all castes? they are suffering the consequences of their acts in a previous state of existence; who can help them?' That is no business of mine.¹

It is most necessary to observe that, not in connexion with the Outcaste only, but in every other relationship, the theory of karma, through representing every weakness, defect, and calamity as punishment and as inevitable, checked seriously the natural flow of common human kindness and put grave obstacles in the way of the rise of philanthropy. Beneficence could only act in spite of the law of karma.²

7. Since the world is the realm of karma and the gods are under its sway as fully as man, and since Brahman³ is in no way connected with karma, the system is not under the control of any divine being, but is self-acting.

B *Souls*. All souls are eternal, as we have seen⁴. Whether they be in gods, demons, men, animals, or plants, souls are under karma in consequence of their former deeds, good and bad, but there is this distinction between them and the phenomenal world, that for souls escape from karma is possible. In order to gain emancipation it is necessary for the soul to toil onward and upward through many lives. No forgiveness of the slightest fault is possible. Everything must

¹ Sastri *Mission of the Brahmo Samaj*, 56-57.

² It is most instructive to note the teaching of the modern Hindu on this important point. In the *Manual of Religion and Ethics* published in connexion with the Central Hindu College, Benares, the difficulty is acknowledged, and the answer is made that, if I see a man in need of help, I ought to do all I can for him, even though I know my efforts are useless, for, if I make the attempt, I shall form good karma for myself, while if I abstain, I shall form evil karma. Clearly there is a serious confusion of moral ideas involved in such an utterance. If it is useless to help the degraded man, how can any one believe that to make a vain effort to help him can form good karma, if the world be wise and moral at core? The truth is that the idea that helping the needy is a good action comes from an akarmic atmosphere. Further, if my action brings my brother no real help, philanthropy is deprived of its only justification. It is no longer philanthropy but self-love which is the motive of what I do.

³ See below pp. 9-22.

⁴ p. 139 above.

be expiated. It is only by living good lives that any progress can be achieved. Then, when through much good karma the soul is born as a man in a good Hindu family, if he is willing to renounce the world altogether and to live a life of inaction as a monk, he may achieve emancipation.

Transmigration cuts clean athwart the old faith in a happy immortality spent in heaven in the company of the 'fathers', Yama, and the gods. When reflection was turned to the point, the belief arose that souls spent the interval between two lives in heaven or in hell according to desert. So heaven and hell became places of temporary sojourn.

C. *Brahman*.¹ The unknowable One, the Source of the universe, is conceived as absolutely free from karma and rebirth. He is constantly spoken of as unborn and as free. The contrast between him and the world in this matter is frequently emphasized. Hence, since all actions, whether good or bad, necessarily create karma, he is conceived as altogether inactive. Had he been thought of as engaging in any kind of action, he would inevitably have come under the dominion of karma. So he is said to be without any desire or purpose that could stir him to action. He is altogether at peace, altogether indifferent, altogether passionless. This great thought, that Brahman is actionless, has produced very deep results upon Hindu theology. It cut Brahman away from morality and from every form of worship, it made it impossible to conceive him as a purposeful Creator; and it strengthened the tendency to think of him as impersonal. We deal with those points at greater length below.²

These paragraphs show what a commanding position the doctrine of karma holds in Hinduism. There is no aspect of the life of the people that has not felt its influence. It is karma that has given Hinduism its peculiar flavour.

It will now be plain that this doctrine is essentially a moral theory. Rebirth is its most noticeable and most picturesque

¹ See below, pp. 219-222.

² See pp. 228-232, 244, 246, 392, 407.

feature; but the real heart of the whole is the conviction that every action works itself out in retribution. This retribution has two aspects. The more prominent of these is the pleasure or pain which the man experiences as the fruit of his action. But besides that, according to the doctrine, every act produces its result upon the man himself, either helping him onward to perfection or degrading him. Then, since the Hindu is taught that, if he is to make good karma, he must fulfil every detail of the laws of his family, caste, and religion, as these are laid down in the *Dharmaśāstras*,¹ the doctrine includes within itself a moral standard as well as a theory of retribution and of soul-progress. The doctrine of karma and transmigration thus forms the basis of the Hindu doctrine of morality.

D We have now to notice that which has proved in history to be one of the most important aspects of the influence of the doctrine, namely its tendency towards pessimism. We must beware lest we exaggerate this tendency, for every observer must realize that the Indian outlook on life is far from being consistently pessimistic. Yet there can be no doubt that a shadow of considerable extent does fall upon Hindu thought. Some have sought the source of this gloom in race, others in climate. What the ultimate cause may have been, no one knows, but there can be no doubt what the proximate cause was—the shadow was cast by the doctrine of transmigration and karma. We shall see in a future chapter that this was the stimulus that roused the Hindu mind to its greatest effort, the effort which produced the philosophies of India.

We may approach the Hindu tendency to pessimism from several distinct conceptions. Each of these we shall find was formed under the influence of karma. It seemed a sad thing to be eternally chained to that which is transitory and full of suffering. Since all the world is under the dominion of karma,

men could not but regard everything phenomenal as leading to rebirth, and therefore as evil. The fact, too, that there was no means of escaping from the retribution due for any single act, nor any way in which a man might rise above his destined karma, proved very galling. Then the fact that it was not controlled by any divine being but acted automatically would also chill the human heart. Men felt they were caught in the teeth of a machine which was unerringly moral but as rigidly godless. Is it any wonder that the doctrine cast a shadow on the Hindu spirit, that men began to feel shut up in prison and weighted with clanking chains?

We are, therefore, not surprised to find that the conception had little more than taken form when men began to seek a way of escape. The very earliest statements of the doctrine of transmigration occur in the Upanishads, the literature of release. So soon as thinking Hindus realized how heavy their chains were, they began to inquire how the human spirit could find emancipation. This effort to win release can be traced in several distinct stages

1. There is first the philosophical period, when the method by which all men sought release was knowledge and monastic renunciation, *vidyā* and *sannyāsa*.¹ Each leader declared he had found the one right way to emancipation, the necessary knowledge and the effective discipline. Philosophy was thus rather a practical science than anything else; though, dealing as it did with the constitution of the universe, it rose in certain systems to metaphysical theories of great interest. The thought on which all worked was this, that if men could break the ties which bound their souls to the phenomenal world, they would escape from the sway of karma and hence from the necessity of rebirth. In each system the theory showed how escape was possible, and those things which the theory declared had to be given up were renounced in the ascetic life prescribed. Whatever else was demanded, action had to

be given up; otherwise the man would continue to create new chains for himself by making new karma. At this stage in the history the monk alone could win release.

2 In all the later stages release is offered to the layman. The life of monastic renunciation is recognized as helpful and meritorious, but it is unnecessary, emancipation may be won in the lay life. The earliest theory of release for the layman probably appeared shortly after the Christian era. The theory is seemingly a reflection of the Buddhist doctrine, that desire binds a man, and that when desire is destroyed the bonds of karma are broken. The Hindu form of the theory is that release can be won without ascetic renunciation, if a man will do all the duties prescribed for him in the Hindu system without motive, without desire for reward.¹

3 Very soon this theory took a slightly different form under the influence of a theistic theology. Here faith begins to believe that the Supreme conceived as personal can release one from the bonds of karma in certain cases. The thought is expressed in two ways. The first is that, if a man does all his duties in the spirit of renunciation to Vishnu, i.e. renouncing in devotion to God all desire of reward for them, then these actions will produce no karma and will have no power to bind him. The other form of expression is: If a man will serve God with devotion, God will release him from all sins.

4. In the Śivaite sect matters did not proceed quite so far along these lines. But in the Śivaite theology of South India we find the belief clearly stated that Śiva chooses carefully such embodiments for souls as shall lead them most rapidly towards the spirituality that is necessary for release. Here again theistic thought is on the way to transform the closed system of transmigration and karma.

These four distinct developments all took place among those who held the transmigration theory most seriously and most intelligently. We have now to notice that, although the

¹ For a fuller statement of this movement see below p. 365

doctrine early found acceptance among Hindus of all grades, and still holds almost universal sway in the community, yet in most circles its full implications have never been known nor acted on. The average Hindu accepts the doctrine as an explanation of caste, of the inequalities of the lot of men, and of striking calamities, but he has never realized that, when rightly understood, it deprives the gods of all power to bless or to curse him. He has continued to worship his gods as his ancestors did before the doctrine of transmigration arose, offering them gifts and sacrifices and praying to them, in order to obtain health, wealth, and children, forgiveness of sin, deliverance from calamity, and all else that the average man wants. On the other hand the hermit, *vānaprastha*, continued the severe austerities which had become usual in the hermitages before transmigration arose, and expected by means of them to win supernatural powers and other gifts altogether outside the closed circle of his karma. These large deductions from the sway of karma in two distinct provinces of the religious life have softened the influence of the doctrine very greatly for the masses.

III. This sketch of the efforts of the Hindu spirit to escape from the sway of karma shows how hard it has been for Hindus throughout the centuries to accept the doctrine in its entirety. The human spirit could not but beat its wings against the bars of such an iron cage. But in our days things have gone much farther. Educated Hindus still think the doctrine a brilliant speculative solution of the problem of the inequalities of human experience, and they glory in it as one of the greatest principles ever thought out by the human mind, but fresh ideas and aspirations have laid hold of them with extraordinary power, so that their thoughts and activities are turned in altogether new directions, and the institutions and practices to which karma and transmigration gave form are being more and more neglected or transformed. The doctrine in its practical application to Hindu life is rapidly dying out.

The life of educated India to-day is dominated by the future, by the vision of the brilliant, happy India that is to rise as a result of the united toil and self-sacrifice of her sons. The people are to be rejuvenated, to become intelligent, capable, wise, and good, the resources of the country are to be used; political freedom is to be achieved; education will stir the mind of India to such universal activity and such successful work as it has never done before; and India, possessing a wise, cultured, religious people, will take its place among the strongest, most honoured, and most progressive peoples of the earth. Thus, there seems to be a good deal of deflexion from the ancient ideal which bids each man live as his father and grandfather lived, and maintain the ancient polity unchanged in all its parts, and also from the ancient belief that the course of the four ages is a continuous process of deterioration. How is the new national life to be worked out, if we are now well on in the Kali Yuga? Clearly the Western idea that human life is capable of indefinite progress, has laid hold of the Hindu mind with great force.

The political side of the national movement is responsible for much progress. Politicians have begun to realize that until the inhabitants of India are much more homogeneous than they are now political liberty is impossible. This is the conviction that has led all our most prominent Indian political nationalists, even Surendranath Banerjee himself, to say that no serious political progress is possible until the people have full social freedom. The meaning of this dictum is that the caste system must be given up before the people can secure political freedom. Taken along with this recent movement the long-continued agitation on the part of the Social Reform leaders in favour of the abolition of caste distinctions. Who will measure the significance of such an attitude on the part of Hindus? As we have just seen, the transmigration theory runs that men are drafted into castes according to their karma. Whoever sincerely believes this will inevitably uphold the caste system to the utmost. To what imbo of selfishness

then, do our politicians and reformers now propose to banish the doctrine?

Comparatively few educated men have yet reached the position held by the leading politicians and reformers, that the caste system should be given up; but many are ready for relaxation of the rules with regard to marriage between sub-castes, and most take large liberties in the matter of food. These changes in ordinary practice and the demands of the whole body of reformers, even when taken together, do not prove that caste is on the verge of passing away; but they do show most conclusively that the old beliefs, that a man's caste springs from his karma, and that the keeping of every caste rule is necessary to secure good karma, are passing away.

Not is that all. Representation on the councils of the Empire is allotted to Hindus and Muhammedans largely in accordance with the census returns. Hence the question whether the fifty millions of the Outcastes are to be reckoned as Hindus or not is a large State question. In the past Hindus have usually refused to acknowledge them as Hindus at all, on the ground that neither their worship nor their culture is worthy of the name, but the new circumstances have led to a new policy. Hindu leaders now speak of them as brothers, and invite them to take their place in the work of the regeneration of India. Some have even proposed to bring them into the religious community. Every one will rejoice that more humane language is being used about them, even if practice is as yet little altered. But one question obtrudes itself. Where has the karma theory gone? How can the unclean, untouchable Outcaste be the Brāhman's brother?

Christian missions have done brilliant work among the Outcastes. Thousands have been won from dirt, degradation, low morals, and superstition to cleanliness, civilization, education, and a Christian life. When missionaries began the work, Hindus scoffed, suggesting they might as well waste their energies over the monkeys of the forest. But the impossible

has been accomplished; the degraded have been uplifted to decency and spiritual religion, and the ancient belief, founded on the law of karma, that such men cannot be reclaimed, has been proved false. In consequence, members of the Brāhma, Pīṭhanā, and Ārya Sāmājes have begun to follow missionaries in the attempt to uplift these people. Even Hindus have been found here and there to set their hand to the work. Could stronger evidence of the collapse of the karma doctrine be given?

All Indians are now summoned to join in earnest self-sacrificing toil for the uplifting of India. There is no longer the old fear of action. Unselfish work and eager philanthropy are commended to the utmost. The educationalist, the economist, the capitalist who starts a large industrial business, the scientist who introduces a new manufacture or a new industry into India, are everywhere praised. The spirit of the transmigration theory, which leads the reflective man to abstain from good as much as from bad action, or to perform actions without desire for results, has been left far behind. The ancient pessimism is felt no more; for men's hearts are now set on India's future, and they constantly see golden visions.

We have already seen how great the changes are which are being introduced into the Hindu family, especially with regard to the position of women. The old idea of the inferiority of women is rapidly passing away. Here, too, the old conception of karma is yielding, for the transmigration theory is that women are born women because of sin in a former life.

There is, thus, abundant evidence to show that the doctrine of transmigration and karma is dying out, even if most Hindus do not realize what is going on. The new thought from the West is stirring the educated class and rousing them to action; and, in consequence, the old transmigration ideas are everywhere being ousted from their places.

Can we see the reason why this powerful ethical system, which in the beginning gave every part of Hinduism its characteristic colouring and which has dominated Indian

thought in every century, is now crumbling to decay? We shall realize in later chapters, as we deal with the various aspects of the religion, what the proximate cause of decay is in each case, but we can already see the main defect in the system, which makes it altogether unfit to bear the pressure of a new type of thought dominated by a far more vital moral faith. The fundamental weakness of the Indian moral theory is that it stands apart from God. All the old gods are subject to karma, and hence no one of them can be the Lord of the moral order; while Brahman is conceived as the direct antithesis of karma, as free from all bonds, separate from all action; so that he cannot be the ruler of the Hindu moral system. Hence two most serious consequences at once appear. The moral order of Hinduism, having no divine personality at its centre, is a mechanical, automatic system, and the supreme God of the religion is non-moral. This fatal divorce is the cause of much of the weakness which is showing itself in decay of the religion to-day.

One cannot but look back with keen regret to the figure of Varuna in the *Rigveda*. He is conceived as an altogether righteous god, and as being the source of *rita*, that is, of all moral and natural law. Here is one who is truly Lord of the moral order. From that most profound conception a noble theistic moral order might have been developed. But, alas! from causes which we do not understand the righteous Varuna was displaced by the mighty warrior Indra and sank down to the position of the god of the waters. Hence, there was no god left in the Hindu pantheon fit to become Lord of the moral order of the universe.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIVINE SOCIAL ORDER

I. Primitive men in ancient times were usually organized in clans or tribes of varying size; and the same is true of savage peoples to-day. There were many forms of social life, but in the type of organization which was most common the members of each tribe usually believed themselves to be of one blood, called themselves brothers, and looked back to some mythical being, human or divine, as their ancestor. Every other tribe was believed to be of distinct origin. Most primitive peoples have believed the different communities of men to be as distinct from each other as species of animals. Indeed the members of each group are inclined to regard themselves as men, and the members of every other group as something less than human. Even advanced peoples have usually regarded themselves as essentially different from others. The Greeks thought of themselves as freemen by nature while all other races were made for slavery. Hence, it never occurred to primitive men that the various tribes could be united and live together.

The struggle for life was exceedingly hard. Perpetual hostility was regarded as the only possible condition of affairs between tribes. Hence, the members of the tribe had to be faithful to each other, if the tribe was to survive. There were so many enemies outside that those inside were compelled to draw very near together. To fight for each other and to avenge each other was the only way to safety. Blood-revenge was the first of duties.

There was thus in the circumstances very little intercourse

with men of other groups, and, indeed, tribal customs seemed to be formed with the very idea of keeping each tribe in isolation. Men of different groups seldom hunted together, and barter was seriously restricted. Even temporary alliances for help in war were not often formed. Men of different tribes seldom took a meal together. To eat together was regarded as a thing possible only for those of the same blood. Indeed a common meal somehow actually had the effect of mangling the blood; so that, while it was right and natural for brothers, it was dangerous in the case of others. Marriage also was usually restricted within certain limits of blood, and, in many tribes, was the subject of the most stringent regulations. On the other hand, there were many tribes which allowed marriage by capture, while some permitted no other form of marriage. In such cases the woman was supposed to be absorbed into the tribe of her husband. There were scarcely any moral relationships with men of other tribes, why should a man have any regard for his enemies?

Amid innumerable differences there is one characteristic which is universally present in primitive society—the social organization of every tribe has a religious basis, and each people regards its own society as sacred.

Apart from its religious foundation, there are three points which are peculiarly noticeable with regard to tribal society. First, each group is exceedingly narrow, and there is no thought of widening society, far less any conception of the unity of mankind. Secondly, social life at this stage is subject to innumerable restraints. People imagine early men to be in all things free, scientific research has shown that the truth is exactly the opposite: the primitive man is everywhere in chains. He is bound to go through a large number of recurrent ceremonies; many kinds of food are absolutely forbidden, his choice in marriage is narrowed by many rules, to look at certain people at certain special times, or to taste their food, is believed to bring death, to look at a newly born child or its mother is forbidden, to touch a dead body is pollution.

to touch certain common objects is believed to be most dangerous. Early society is thus barred and restricted at every turn. Thirdly, there is little that is moral in the social conceptions of these tribesmen. While the innumerable prohibitions of their social life are the source from which later morality was born, there are few of these regulations that are themselves moral in the modern sense, and there is scarcely a trace of any moral relations between tribes. Thus very small groups, innumerable restraints, and rudimentary morality, are the leading characteristics of early society.

II With the progress of civilization this particularist tribal organization has usually been transcended in various ways.

The introduction of agriculture leads to a settled life and a growing desire for peace. Thus, unconsciously, the old hostility dies down between tribes settled near each other, and various forms of intercourse spring up without interfering with the ancient tribal organization. This prepares the way for new forms of social life and the creation of a larger unity.

Military conquests by destroying, separating, transplanting, enslaving, have frequently broken up the old tribal organization and laid the foundations of a larger political and social life. The great kings of Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, and China produced vast changes by their conquests. In these cases we see many distinct groups welded together by military pressure into a single nation.

Greece shows us higher forms of life and a new basis of unity. The various Greek states, while retaining each its old exclusive social laws, were so conscious of the rich deep culture which distinguished Hellenes from other races, that they formed numerous federations, which helped them in their struggles with outsiders, and yet left each city-state free to follow its own genius in religion, politics, art, and social life. To this is largely due the vital individuality and fruitfulness of Sparta, Athens, Miletus, Thebes, Corinth and other cities.

But these loose federations were not strong enough to resist military pressure, as the Greeks discovered to their cost when

brought face to face with Philip of Macedon. It was the Romans who produced the one form of organization which, while allowing all the old groups, great and small, to retain their own peculiar religious and social observances and exclusiveness, yet drew from them sufficient strength to render them full protection within the mighty Empire and so gave the germs of culture the opportunity of sprouting and bearing fruit. The principle of the Empire was toleration of all racial and tribal idiosyncracies, whether religious or social, so long as they did not endanger the common peace and the common safety, and the Romans themselves were as exclusive in social life as any other group, until the decay of the old stock compelled them to draw in outsiders for the maintenance of the Empire.

This stage in the growth of human society shows a great advance upon the earlier stage. Men now live in far larger societies; the hostility between individual tribes has been very largely overcome. The progress made along this line is very remarkable and of very great value. Yet it is well worthy of remark that even in the highest of these organizations, namely the Greek federations and the Roman Empire, the ancient idea, that different groups of men are of distinct origin and must live separate lives, survives as strong as ever. Each group believes itself to be a holy people of pure blood, regards its religion as its own exclusive possession, and holds that marriage and social intercourse are sacred and must be kept inviolate—the touch of outsiders is pollution. The spirit extends even to other spheres. Amongst the Greeks and early Romans political privileges were still restricted to the blood of the sacred race; and even the chief privileges of business were denied to aliens. All this is true, in spite of the larger federation under which men lived. The sacred character of each form of society, while of incalculable value, obstructs rather seriously every movement and tendency towards progress.

Considerable advances also vis à vis the matter of liberty

The Greek and the Roman, while still restricted by old prejudices in matters of religion, marriage, social intercourse, and such like, and still bound by many a rule which we should consider irrational, had much more freedom than primitive people have.

Thirdly, ethical ideas have made very large progress. They now have a far wider scope within the racial group, and have begun to influence men very deeply outside their own particular clan. Yet even so, the Greek or Roman of ancient times, if driven out of his clan, felt that he was a ruined man, practically expelled from human life.

In the case of each of these ancient peoples, Babylonian, Egyptian, Chinese, Greek, Roman and what not, there was a deeply rooted conviction that the social organization of the people had been created by the gods, and was therefore sacred and to be reverently and faithfully maintained. The persecution of Christians by the Roman Government arose from the belief that Christianity was essentially hostile to the constitution of ancient society. To resist this new society-wrecking force was held to be a high religious duty.

III. The *Avesta* and the *Rigveda*, when read side by side, enable us to form a picture of the common life lived by the ancestors of the Persians and the Indo-Aryans while they were still a single people. They, like so many other ancient races, were roughly divided into three classes, nobles, priests, and common people. By the time when the hymns of the *Rigveda* were being composed these distinctions had become if possible deeper, but the divisions were even then but classes.

During the latter part of the period of the *Rigveda* the priests made notable advances. The hymns themselves are very clear proof of their intellectual progress, ritual and sacrifice were becoming more and more elaborate; and schools had been established for the training of young priests. In such circumstances the priesthood naturally tended to become hereditary. The sacerdotal skill and knowledge which a man had acquired were too precious to be handed on to any one

other than a son. Here we have one of several forces which combined to produce caste.

Meanwhile the process of fighting and conquering the aborigines was producing its inevitable results. The differences between the tall, white Aryans, with their advancing civilization and noble religion, and the short, black aborigines, with their coarse habits and degrading superstitions, were so great that cultured Aryans could not fail to shrink from close contact with them: intermarriage was unthinkable, and even social intercourse was impossible. The colour line was very noticeable and became the basis of all future distinctions. *varna*, colour, is one of two Sanskrit words used to indicate distinctions of caste. We see the elements of a similar situation before our eyes to-day in the attitude of the average European to Indians, or still better in the complete social separation of negroes from whites in the southern half of the United States. There is always this tendency when, along with a marked difference in culture between two races, there is a sharp 'colour' distinction as well. Thus, as the conquest of North India proceeded, and the various aboriginal peoples came under Brāhman authority, there was only one method of organization possible, namely, to make the distinction between pure Aryans and aborigines absolute, and to allow the old tribal differences among the latter to remain. This, then, the upper class of the Aryan invaders did, but it is perfectly clear that the rank and file of the Aryan invaders must have intermarried freely with the aborigines: the ethnology of modern India makes that perfectly evident.

Before the canon of the *Rigveda* was finally closed, a hymn found its way into the collection which declares that the Brāhman, the Rājanya, the Vaiśya, and the Śūdra had each a separate origin in God. The Brāhmins, the Rājanyas or Kshatriyas, and the Vaiśyas are the three old classes, the priests, the nobles, and the people, and the Śūdras are conquered aborigines. These four are now declared to be absolutely distinct races, each a separate creation. The passage speaks of Purusha as the great sacrifice and goes on

The Brāhman was his mouth, the Kājanya was made from his arms, the being called Vāśīya, he was his thighs; the Śūdra sprang from his feet.

Rigveda. X xc 12

This is not caste yet, but it shows that men's minds were tending in the direction of caste, and that the three classes were becoming more distinctly shut off from each other and from the aborigines. We have, here the basis of caste, the religious sanction for it rather than the thing itself. Events clearly were moving in the direction of the formation of a rigid social system. Doubtless intermarriages were still common; but the flowing tide ran towards caste organization.

The ancient belief in the separate origin of distinct groups of men, and in the necessity of an exclusive life for the preservation of purity both of race and culture, was the actual source of the conception; the verse quoted above gave the necessary religious sanction; the splendid rise of the Brāhmins and the Kshatriyas through their swiftly-growing culture and immense capacity created the political and social situation, while the absolute banning of the aborigines in marriage and social intercourse, coupled with their reception into the enlarged Aryan community, which was now taking shape, provided an example of a group, completely isolated socially, while included in the wider union, which could not but react on the classes within the Aryan people itself.

But all this would give us only such endogamous religious groups as were found among a number of ancient peoples, while Hindu caste is a perfectly unique form of social organization. What made the difference was the doctrine of rebirth and karma, as we saw above.¹ According to this theory each man is born into that caste for which his former actions have prepared him. If he is far advanced in spirituality, he is born a Brāhman, if he is a step lower, he is born a Kshatriya, and so on. Thus in Hinduism a man's caste is held to be an infallible index of the state of his soul. It was this reasoned

conviction that laid hold of the Hindu mind and made the observance of all caste rules a matter of conscience and also of deep personal interest. Only by living as a faithful member of his caste could a man retain the spirituality his soul had won. To marry a woman of low caste, to eat with a man of low caste, or to touch an Outcaste, was to contract gross spiritual pollution, the result of which would be not merely some social slight, or even excommunication from his caste-fellows, but, frightful punishment in hell, and then all the misery of an animal or Outcaste existence in his next life. Men sincerely believed that the occupation assigned to the caste was the best discipline for the soul of the man born in the caste.

According as each man devotes himself to his proper work does he obtain consummation. . . . Better one's own caste-duty ill done than another's caste-duty well done.¹

By the close of the sixth century B.C., as we may see from the *Dharmasūtra* of Gautama, the caste system had arisen in all its essentials. The supremacy and the religious authority of the priests form the basis of all the legislation of the Hindu people as stated in this law-book. The three highest castes stand quite apart from all others as the holy people for whom the Brāhman may sacrifice and whom he may teach. The religious education which each Brāhman, Kshatriya, and Vaiśya boy receives is held to be a birth into a spiritual life, so that these castes are called 'twice-born'. They alone wear the sacred thread. The position and the duties of Śūdras are clearly defined, and even references to unclean Outcastes and *mlecchas* occur.

But though the system appears full-grown in Gautama and other early law-books, it is perfectly clear from the rest of the literature—Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain—that the laws were far from being fully observed in actual life. The authority and the supremacy of the Brāhmins were by no

means universally acknowledged; for the Kshatriyas still contended with them in many parts of the country for the first place; marriages between people of different castes were still common, and progress towards the faithful observance of caste regulations was a slow process. The prodigious religious ferment of the seventh and following centuries B. C. must have endangered the Brāhman position very seriously; for all the philosophic and ascetic movements were, at the outset at least, more or less hostile not only to Brāhmanic sacrifices and ritual but also to the exclusive pretensions and demands of the Brāhmans. Yet the process went on. The stars in their courses fought in favour of Brāhmanism; the Hindu people steadily came more completely under Brāhmanic rules and regulations the social life of North India gradually settled in a fixed shape.

Yet it was several centuries before caste law assumed the rigid form which it has to-day. The Christian era may be taken as a mean date. The process, in the circumstances, was a most natural one. It was not the work of a master organizer, but the slowly evolved product of the inner mind of the people. We may speak of the religio-social empire of Hinduism, but we must carefully realize that it was created by no emperor and that at no time has it had a centralized organization. The Brāhmans have had much to do with the working out of the system; but there is no hierarchy uniting all Brāhmans.

Each of the three highest castes recognized in the verse in the *Rigveda* gradually expanded into a group of castes. Two processes contributed to this result, differentiation and foisting. Groups of Brāhmans, Kshatriyas, or Vaiśyas, through migrations or through gradual changes in culture, education, custom, and wealth, got differentiated into sub-castes which did not intermarry; and groups of people belonging to lower castes or even to other races were foisted into these castes and obtained recognition. The aborigines were not all made into one caste and named Śūdras they entered the fold as

separate groups, each of which gradually developed into a caste.

It is also clear that large masses of aborigines were shut out from the Hindu community as being too unclean for intercourse. Some of these have lived in secluded places and have retained their ancient religion and social life, while others have lived near Hindus, and in imitation of them have become organized in caste-fashion. These are the Outcastes, the Untouchables, the Depressed Classes of to-day. We must, however, note that, according to all Hindu authorities, some at least of these Outcaste groups arose from mixed unions among caste Hindus.

These people form one of the largest problems of modern India. Though they have lived beside Hindus for more than two thousand years, so that they have absorbed the spirit of caste and certain rudimentary religious ideas from Hinduism, yet they have been treated with such inhumanity that they remain to this day in the most piteous poverty, dirt, degradation, and superstition. They are not allowed to live in the same village with Hindus. They must not approach a high-caste man, for their very shadow pollutes. In South India they must not come within thirty yards of a Brāhman; and they are usually denied the use of public wells, roads, bridges, and ferries. They are not allowed to enter Hindu temples. Their religion is in the main an attempt to pacify demons and evil spirits. They number some fifty millions.

There is no country in the world that is without its submerged class. Under every known civilization there is at least a remnant who fall behind, who fail to grip the necessary conditions of the times, who tend to become human wreckage. But where outside India is there a polity devised with the determinate purpose of creating a huge submerged class, of crushing one-sixth of the whole people down in dirt and inhuman degradation?

Throughout all the centuries since the caste system reached its full form changes have occurred. Groups of low caste

men have occasionally been able to secure recognition as belonging to higher castes. During the early centuries of our era many foreign tribes entered Hinduism and became organized as castes. Their kings were called Kshatriyas, while the commons received lower recognition. Even now the process of caste formation has not ceased, and the modification of caste rules is still possible in any of the castes. Most scholars believe that Muhammadan influence stiffened caste practice. Yet, in the main, the system itself has remained unchanged for two thousand years.

IV. The many castes of modern Hinduism are thus supposed to fall into four, or, if we include the Outcastes, into five groups as under :

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Caste occupation.</i>	
A Bṛāhmanas	priests	{ The threetwice-born castes, supposed to be of pure Aryan blood, and called twice-born on account of their education. They alone wear the sacred thread
B Kshatriyas	rulers and warriors	
C Vaiśyas	business men and farmers	
D. Śūdras	servants	{ Aborigines admitted to the Hindu community.
E Pañchamas (i.e. fifth-class men), called also Outcastes, Untouchables, &c		{ Unclean aborigines and progeny of mixed marriages.

We must note carefully, however, that, though this is the scheme of the caste system, it is very difficult to fit all the modern facts into it. In North India the three twice-born castes stand out quite distinct, but instead of two well-defined groups, Śūdras and Pañchamas, what we find is an immense collection of castes, the order of whose precedence it would be very difficult to settle, and which it would be rather hard to divide into Śūdras and Outcastes. The spirit of caste, i.e. the tendency to subdivide into closed groups, has worked so powerfully that it has broken through the ancient organization. In the South, on the other hand, there are very few Kshatriyas

and Vaiśyas, so that the bulk of the population falls into three clearly distinguished groups, Brāhman, Sūdras, and Peśichamas.

The following are the essential elements of caste :

A. The whole system rests on the belief that mankind is not a unity but consists of a large number of species each of distinct origin, and that each man is born into that species or sub-species for which his karma fits him. If he is very far advanced, in virtue and spirituality, he is born a Brāhman ; if less advanced he is born a Kshatriya ; and so on.

B. Since Brāhman is born such because of their superiority in spirituality, to them all religious authority has been given by the gods. They alone, in virtue of their lofty spiritual nature, the result of virtuous action in many previous births, are fit for the highest spiritual functions, viz. giving religious teaching, deciding points of law, sacrificing and performing ceremonies.

C. There are an indefinite number of distinct species of men, but the three Aryan castes are far above all others. After them come the Sūdras, who are the descendants of those aborigines who were admitted into the Hindu fold, and then the unclean aborigines and the mixed castes. The last have arisen, according to Hindu theory, through intermarriage between the castes or through the commission of some sin. Foreigners are unclean and are called *mlecchas*.

D. Men vary in value according to caste, and therefore must be dealt with in all matters in accordance therewith. Thus :

- (1) In education, the Brāhman alone has the right to teach, and since only the three twice-born castes are spiritual men, they alone are allowed to hear the sacred literature (*śruti*) and to receive the training of the Brāhmanical schools. All women are excluded.
- (2) Consequently, the ministrations of the Brāhman, the regular sacrifices with the sacred texts prescribed for them, the Vedic sacrifices and the daily devotions (*sandhyā*) are restricted to the three castes.
- (3) Men and women of the four castes are admitted to Hindu temples, but no others except by special favour.

4. If one man injures another the heinousness of the sin depends upon

the caste of the sufferer: the higher the caste the greater the sin. Hindu law also directs that fines and punishments shall be imposed according to caste. the higher the caste of the criminal the lighter the punishment

- (5) Outcastes must keep at a distance from caste people, lest they should pollute by touch or shadow, the distance being roughly proportionate to caste status. They are not allowed to live in the same village with high-caste Hindus nor to enter Hindu temples

E. Each member of a caste is bound to preserve his purity to the utmost. Pollution is dangerous not only to himself but to all the members of his family, dead, living, and unborn, and in less degree to other members of his caste¹. Purity is preserved by the faithful performance of the domestic sacraments, the śrāddha ceremonies, and Vedic sacrifices, and the daily devotions prescribed, and by the avoidance of any breach of caste rules in the matter of marriage, food, social intercourse, or occupation. Only if a man faithfully obeys all these rules does he make good karma for himself and so secure a good birth in his next life. The chief of these rules are

- (1) No man may marry outside his own caste. Usually there are also a number of rules restricting a man's choice of a wife to certain subdivisions of the caste. In many parts of India sectarian differences are so acute that intermarriage and interdining are prohibited. This creates further subdivision of castes.
- (2) Certain kinds of food are recognised as legitimate, while others are absolutely proscribed. There are stringent rules as to the caste of those who may cook for the members of the caste.
- (3) No man may eat with a man of lower caste than himself. There are also strict rules as to the castes from whose hands one may receive water.
- (4) There is in each caste one occupation which is regarded as fully legitimate. Among the lower orders the rule is usually very

¹ Confounding of caste brings to hell alike the stock's slayers and the stock; for their fathers fall when the offerings of the cake and the water to them fail.

By this guilt of the destroyers of a stock, which makes castes to be confounded, the everlasting Laws of race and Laws of stock are overthrown.

For men the Laws of whose stock are overthrown a dwelling is ordained in hell. *Gitā* 1. 42-44.

stringent, but among the higher castes there is a wider choice. Even amongst the highest, however, there are definite limits to liberty, and the *Gītā* says it is better to keep to the caste occupation and do bad work than to adopt another and do good work¹

(5) No Hindu may cross the ocean.

All these regulations, except the marriage law, are at present undergoing considerable modification among certain groups of educated men, especially in the large cities. Among the educated the fifth is now inoperative in Calcutta, and is gradually becoming so elsewhere. For the mass of the people they remain as before.

F. If a man break one of the rules of his caste, some authoritative priest pronounces sentence on him, or a meeting of the members of his caste belonging to the neighbourhood is called, and his case is dealt with. If he is outcasted, he is driven from his home, is disinherited, and can never marry in his caste, nor eat with his relatives or any member of the caste. These liabilities will rest on his children and his descendants for ever.

It is to be most carefully noted that excommunication is imposed only on account of a breach of caste law, and does not stand in any relation to morality. A man may be guilty of gross immoralities and yet may be in good standing in his caste and his family; while a man of the noblest character who breaks a caste law, however absurd or inhuman it may be, will be outcasted. In Mysore, where Christian baptism still deprives a man of his property, there were two brothers. One was a man of high character, but he had become a Christian; the other was an orthodox Hindu, but was in prison undergoing a sentence for some crime. The Christian was disinherited, and the criminal got his property. This is in strict accordance with Hindu principle. The law-books contain many fine moral precepts, but they do not touch caste organization.

V. We may now try to estimate the work which caste has done for India.

1. The caste system was a great advance on the simple social arrangements the Aryans had when they entered India, for by it they were enabled to organize the great empire they had won, to live a peaceful and progressive life in close association with the aboriginal inhabitants, and to impart to these backward peoples some measure at least of their own higher civilization. There is no need of many words to show that it was an advance for the aborigines so far as they were admitted to the system: the Sūdras are to-day the middle-class people of the country. Thus to both partners the new arrangements were solidly beneficial. Let us, therefore, not criticize the conquerors, because they did not introduce into the Hindu religious empire ideas which did not become operative in the world until many centuries later. Caste was the best possible solution of the problem open to them. The old groups were retained in all their insularity and exclusiveness, but they were brought into some sort of relationship the one to the other and to the three classes of the Aryan people. The Hindu method of segregation did not lead to the wholesale destruction of aboriginals such as has occurred in many lands. Rules gradually grew up for regulating the intercourse of the groups with one another. Caste was thus really a very great conception, the greatest possible at that time. While in the circumstances of these modern days it more and more proves itself an anti-social system, it was social, and not the reverse, when it was instituted. The whole population was unified in some degree common religious ideas and practices were taught them and took possession of them, and the aborigines necessarily admired and copied in varying degrees the social usages of the upper castes. Hindu society was on the whole healthy until caste became rigid somewhere about the Christian era.

2. Along with the institutions of the Hindu family caste has preserved the Hindu race and its civilization. Apart from

this powerful protection, Hindu culture would have been overwhelmed by the terrific political storms of the centuries, and the race could have survived only in fragments. But, thanks to caste and the Hindu family, they have survived, and with them many other groups also have been preserved; for, embedded in the curious conglomerate of the Hindu social fabric, many a caste of strange ethnology and culture may be seen, clearly descendants of some invading force, who, flinging themselves violently on India and gaining a foothold there, were finally absorbed by the people they came to attack, and owe to their absorption their position to-day. Indeed, so powerful has the attraction been that the Hindu people have drawn into their federation all invaders, except monotheists

3. Caste did for many centuries in India the work which was done in Europe by the mediaeval trade-guilds. The system springs from different ideas, yet worked on much the same lines. It preserved learning by isolating the Brāhman caste and throwing on them the exclusive duty and privilege of teaching. It preserved manual skill and knowledge of the arts and industries by compelling boys to follow the profession of their father. A permanent division of labour was also secured. By means of caste-guilds wages and prices were maintained at a moderate standard¹

4. Caste has also served to some extent the purpose of a poor law in India; for the well-to-do members of a caste fulfil, in some degree at least, the duty of providing for those members who have fallen into indigence.

VI Caste retains to this day a powerful hold on the Hindu mind. To the average man, whether Brāhman, Śūdra, or Out-caste, caste life is not only society and respectability, race purity and religion, but comfort, personal safety, and culture. In caste a man believes he has behind him a pure ancestry to which the lineage of the kings of England is but of yesterday.

¹ Banerjee, *A Study of Indian Economy* s. 37-38

even the Pariah,¹ who to the Sudra (not to speak of the Brāhman) is so low and unclean as to be untouchable is in his own eyes a man of high birth and good ancestry, because there are so many groups lower still. To go out of caste is to degrade oneself to the level of coarse, ill-bred men. It is to go out of civilization.

Yet, in spite of all that caste has done, and in spite of its giant grip on the Indian spirit, educated Hindu society shows a number of anti-caste tendencies of very great importance.

As we have already seen, the early Buddhists and the other unorthodox schools of the same time withstood the pretensions of the Brāhmans, but there is no indication in the *Pāli Tripitaka* that Buddha or his followers condemned caste as such. The system had not then become rigid and harmful; so that it would have been strange if they had assailed it. Further, they held the doctrine of transmigration, which naturally expresses itself socially in caste. Nor was any idea incompatible with caste planted in the Indian mind by Buddhism. The same is true of Islam. Men simply did not feel that there was anything wrong in it. From the eleventh or twelfth century of our era, it is true, an occasional voice is raised against the system. In the writings of Kapilar, a Tamil, and of Vemana, a Telugu,² we find the system subjected to very acute criticism. Basava in founding his sect, the Vīra-Śaivas or Lingāyats, appointed non-Brāhmans as priests and forbade his followers to recognize caste; and the same is true of the Kabīrpanthīs and the Sikhs, but the poison has crept back into each of these three bodies. Yet these were but sporadic protests. Never until now has there been any sign that the Indian mind was dissatisfied with the system. The facts we have now to deal with are therefore of great significance.

¹ The Pariahs are one of the large Outcaste castes of South India. The word *of en naccu e y sud a* a synonym of Outcaste.

² *Heart of India* 94 100 110 112

A. Educated men everywhere tend to seek certain forms of social freedom which are contrary to the rules of caste. This tendency, which is clearly a natural outcome of Western education, seldom touches marriage: the average educated Hindu keeps the matrimonial rules of caste with great care. It is in matters of food, social intercourse, occupation, and travel that freedom is desired.

1. The Hindu enjoys European food and wants to be free to use it from time to time. The average man keeps the rules of diet at home, but grants himself more or less liberty elsewhere. Many are so completely emancipated as to be quite ready to eat any European food, even beef, and to take Western liquor also, but most take only little liberties; and here and there one meets a man who is rigidly strict with his food.

2. The educated man wants to be free in the matter of social intercourse. Western education has been such a levelling influence that it is but natural a Hindu should want to dine with men of lower castes who sat on the same bench at College with him. When this feeling has grown a little stronger, he feels inclined to dine with Brāhmans, Indian Christians, and Muhammadans. The great societies, religious, educational, social and political, which sway educated men so powerfully, strengthen this tendency very greatly. If men work together for the highest ends, why should they not eat together? The student meets his European professor at a social gathering and finds it the most natural thing possible to take a cup of tea with him. When he goes out into the world, he enjoys dining with a few European friends at one of the Indo-European clubs which are now springing up. Wherever there are close relations, the desire for true social intercourse necessarily follows.

3. The educated man feels free to adopt any occupation. The sacredness of the cow and the feeling against the slaughter of animals have made Hindus look down very seriously upon all professions connected with hides. Yet one may find

Brāhmins dealing in leather, and many other anomalous facts. Almost anything is condoned to-day if it is believed to help forward the regeneration of India.

4. Until a few years ago a student who went to Europe or America to study had to undergo *prāyaścitta* (a ceremony of atonement) on his return to India or else suffer excommunication. In consequence there grew up in Calcutta a small community of highly educated men who had lost their standing in Hinduism for the sake of education. Most of them joined the Brāhma Samāj. But nowadays a Calcutta student of any caste is at once received back into Hindu society on his return. The law against crossing the ocean is not used against him. This procedure is spreading slowly among the educated classes in other parts of India also. Students, when in Europe, America, or Japan, do not attempt to keep caste rules about diet and interdining. This, too, is now condoned without a word.

These facts are most interesting and significant, but it would be very easy to exaggerate their importance. So long as the laws of marriage are rigorously enforced, the basis of caste remains. These changes in diet, in social intercourse, in occupation, and in travel are of considerable value to the community; but they rather prove that caste is a very elastic institution than that it is shaken to its depths.

B. The Social Reform movement is of great importance. While reformers have given their chief attention to family questions, caste in its various aspects has also been one of the subjects of their thought and agitation. It was from the side of religion that the movement started, but hygienic, moral, economic, and national considerations now play a large part in their literature.

1. Comparatively little has been written or said on the matter of food, but a few men have advocated the introduction of more nourishing diet, especially among certain races. Swāmī Vivekānanda thought Indians required to use less vegetables and more flesh in order to develop both physique and

character. He himself, though he was such a staunch Hindu, ate beef. Dr S. C. Mullick, a medical man of considerable reputation in Calcutta is of opinion that the physique of the Bengali race suffers rather seriously because so little flesh is eaten.

2. Social reformers have done precious service in the way of advocating and practising interdining. The pages of the organ of the movement, the *Indian Social Reformer*, are often used for this good end. At their own annual conferences dinners are held at which Hindus of all castes, and now and then Indians of other religions, sit down together. So, after the Conference of the Aryan Brotherhood held in Bombay in November, 1912, a great company of Hindus of many castes dined together.

3. The Reform movement presses very seriously the wisdom of removing the barriers which at present prevent marriages between people of different sub-castes. The ideal aimed at is that all Brāhmins should be free to intermarry, that there should be no marriage barriers among Kshatriyas, or among Vaiśyas, or among Sūdras. This in itself would be a very large reform, for there are innumerable subdivisions and restrictions within each of the great castes. But the difficulties in the way are very great. The Kshatriyas of North India have now an annual conference at which they discuss matters relating to the welfare of the caste, and other castes and sections of castes have similar gatherings. At these meetings the great advantages that would arise from such a reform are often set forth in a presidential oration, but very little has yet been done.

4. It is only the leading reformers who propose what is called intercaste marriages among Hindus, i.e. that all barriers should be removed, so that a Brāhman might marry a Vaiśya or a Sūdra. This seems to most men a very far-away ideal, an almost impossible reform.

C. The third set of influences worthy of our study are those

that centre in the Outcastes. During the past thirty-five years myriads of these downtrodden people have passed into the Christian Church, and wherever Missions have been able to give them sufficient attention brilliant results have been won¹. A distinguished Brāhman official writes of the work as follows in the *Travancore Census Report of 1901*.

But for these missionaries, these humble orders of Hindu society will for ever remain unraised. Their material condition, I dare say, will have improved with the increased wages, improved labour market, better laws, and more generous treatment from an enlightened Government like ours, but to the Christian missionaries belongs the credit of having gone to their humble homes, and awakened them to a sense of a better earthly existence. This action of the missionary was not a mere improvement upon ancient history, a kind of polishing and refining of an existing model, but an entirely original idea, conceived and carried out with commendable zeal, and oftentimes in the teeth of opposition and persecution. I do not refer to the emancipation of the slave, or the amelioration of the labourer's condition, for these always existed more or less in our past humane governments. But the heroism of raising the low from the slough of degradation and debasement was an element of civilization unknown to ancient India².

Two points with regard to this aspect of Mission work require notice here.

Christianity and education produce marvellous results among these people, especially in the second generation. Many boys and girls prove quite bright students, and a small percentage proceed to the university and take degrees. In all the districts where these mass movements have taken place, you may find Mission schools in which the teachers are of Outcaste descent, while in every class a number of Brāhman boys study under them. The whole theory of caste is here proved by ocular demonstration to be radically false. The Hindu doctrine is that the unclean Outcastes cannot be raised. Christianity does raise them.

The great success which Christianity has met with in dealing

¹ See Phillips *The Outcastes' Hope*

² Phillips 81

with the Outcastes has attracted wide attention in India.¹ Some have been stirred to deep sympathy, others have been roused to fury; but all have realized the great significance of the movement. In consequence the Ārya Samāj and the Brāhma Samāj have started Missions of their own to try to win the Outcastes, while a number of advanced Hindus, chiefly under the influence of members of the Prāthmā Samāj in Western India, have organized what is called the Depressed Classes Mission. This last body aims chiefly at education and encouragement. The Nationalist leaders call loudly for the education of the Outcastes and the betterment of the conditions of their life. One of these men remarked

After all, when it comes to practice, Christianity alone is effecting what we Nationalists are crying out for—namely the elevation of the masses.²

D. The main social result which has arisen from the activity of the political leaders is also well worthy of our attention. For twenty-five years the Congress leaders have been toiling to bring their ideal of representative government nearer. The experience they have gained in this very uphill struggle has, at last, convinced them that the divisions of caste are the most formidable of all the obstacles in their way. One after the other they have come to this conclusion. Surendranath Bannerjea, the greatest popular leader in Bengal, caused extreme excitement only last year by publicly declaring that complete social freedom was indispensable for the attainment of political liberty.

E. It will perhaps be well to give a few quotations from notable men on the general question of the influence of caste. The first is a sentence from a leading article in the *Mahratta*,³ which is by no means one of the most advanced papers

No one now says or even thinks that the old water-tight compartments of caste should be perpetuated in future, even on the ground

¹ See *The Depressed Classes*, a booklet containing twenty-three essays by people of many faiths, published by Natesan, Madras.

² Ph II p. 28.

³ November 7 1909.

that the caste system was a convenient method of securing division of labour in practice.

The others are from a more advanced position. The following comes from the *Times* report of an address delivered before the Indian section of the Royal Society of Arts by the Honourable Sir K. G. Gupta, a member of the India Council.

The caste system had served useful purposes in the past, but it had not now a single redeeming feature. If the Hindu was again to lift his head and take part in the great work of nation-building, he must revert to the original Aryan type and demolish the barriers dividing the community.

Mr. Shridhar Ketkar, in his work on *Caste*,¹ says,

The result is disunion of the people, the worst type the world has ever seen.

The next is from Lala Lāpat Rai, the Punjabi leader.

Caste . . . is a disgrace to our humanity, our sense of justice, and our feeling of social affinity . . . a standing blot on our social organization.

The editor of the *Indian Social Reformer* speaks of caste as 'the great monster we have to kill', and declares it to be 'utterly opposed to the modern idea of good citizenship'. But, instead of multiplying quotations, it will probably be more helpful if we read the words of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, the author of *Gitanjali*, who is by far the greatest literary force at present in Bengal, and whose serious spirit and balanced character give his opinions very great weight.

This immutable and all-pervading system of caste has no doubt imposed a mechanical uniformity upon the people, but it has, at the same time, kept their different sections inflexibly and unalterably separate, with the consequent loss of all power of adaptation and readjustment to new conditions and forces. The regeneration of the Indian people, to my mind, *directly and perhaps solely depends upon the removal of this condition of caste*. When I realise the hypnotic hold which this gigantic system of cold-blooded repression has taken on the minds of our people, whose social body it has so completely entwined in its endless coils that the free expression of manhood, even

under the direst necessity, has become almost an impossibility, the only remedy that suggests itself to me is to educate them out of their trance . . . Now has come the time when India must begin to build, and dead arrangement must gradually give way to living construction, organized growth . . . If to break up the feudal system and the tyrannical conventionalism of the mediæval Church, which had outraged the healthier instincts of humanity, Europe needed the thought-impulse of the Renaissance and the fierce struggle of the Reformation, do we not need in a greater degree an overwhelming influx of higher social ideas before a place can be found for true political thinking? Must we not have that greater vision of humanity which will impel us to shake off the fetters that shackle our individual life before we begin to dream of national freedom? ¹

These new movements of the Indian spirit are full of interest and suggest many questions . . . Yet it would be most unwise to jump to the conclusion that these yearnings and strivings are proof that the citadel of caste is about to fall. No one who has been in touch with the Hindu people, and who has realized the vitality, the pervasiveness, the grip of the system will be likely to minimize it or to imagine that it will be lightly overthrown. Caste has been not merely a vast organized system built upon the rock of religious belief, but a bodiless spirit, an overpowering contagion, which has overtaken and poisoned every Hindu sect that has tried to escape from it, and which has infected, at least in some degree, every community in India, numbing with its venom great groups of Muhammadans, little circles of Jews, and even certain Christian churches

It is also necessary to realize clearly that the immediate outlook in the matter of caste reform is not very hopeful. Social reformers are more sure of their position and wield greater influence than ever before; the political movement has now become an ally in some sense of the reform movement; and the slight changes visible in practice among educated men are all in favour of freedom. But during the

¹ The writer owes this quotation to Andrews 184 - but it appeared originally in the *Modern Review*

past twenty-five years the revival of Hinduism has made enormous strides; and, as strength and confidence have grown, the leaders have plucked up courage to defend more and more of the ancient system. Between 1850 and 1890 very few educated men publicly defended caste or idolatry. The Ārya Samāj, the most vehemently anti-Christian body in India, was founded in 1875 by Dayānanda Śarasvatī—he denounced both caste and idolatry. But since then things have rather gone the other way. Rāmakrishṇa Paramahansa and his disciple Vivekānanda defended everything that is Hindu; the Theosophical Society, under Mrs. Besant's leadership, has taken the same line of policy; to-day every important sect and section of Hinduism has its own defence organization, and by arguments of the most amazing character, and principles and analogies drawn from everything in heaven and on earth, the Hindu undertakes to prove that caste is the most reasonable form of society possible, and that Hindu idols are channels of the purest spirituality. These movements certainly do not promise well for caste reform.

VII. But, while we must acknowledge that the agitation in favour of reform has as yet made very little impression on the mighty fortress of caste, and that the present policy of the leaders of the Hindu revival is a grave menace to the whole movement, there is one fact in the situation which has hitherto been very little noticed, and yet is of far more vital importance than all that the Social Reform movement and the Hindu revival taken together have been able to accomplish. The fact we refer to is this, that *the religious basis of caste has faded out of the minds of educated Hindus*. Articles and speeches which deal with the question, whether they plead for reform or seek to show the wisdom and the reasonableness of the ancient system, invariably take no notice of the mighty beliefs on which the organization rests. The leaders of the revival point out how much caste has done for the division of labour, for the preservation of skill and learning, and for the physique and the purity of the higher castes and they frequently make the

reckless assertion that there is as much caste in European as in Hindu society; but there is no attempt made to justify caste from the point of view of the old religious beliefs. Social reformers do not find it necessary to argue against the old doctrines. Who believes nowadays that the Brāhman is so much more spiritual than other men that all religious authority, teaching, and ritual ought to be in his hands? Who now holds that it is sinful to allow a Śūdra or a foreigner to hear the Veda? Who now subscribes to the doctrine of the *Gītā* that it is better for the Brāhman to be a bad priest than a good doctor or business man?¹ Who now believes that the Outcaste is a man whose former lives have been so foul that physical contact with him brings spiritual pollution to a high-caste Hindu? The truth is that the atmosphere of the new age makes the old ideas which lie at the basis of caste incredible. Let us consider them briefly, and the truth of this will become apparent.

A. The foundation of caste is the belief that the four castes had each a distinct origin in God. All serious scholars agree that in the society represented in the *Rigveda* there was no caste. The ninetieth hymn of the tenth book,² which is one of the latest hymns in the whole collection, shows that by the end of the period there was a desire for something like caste, but even then the four castes were still but classes. Throughout the whole of the period of the *Rigveda* there was free intermarriage between the various classes; and there was nothing to prevent a warrior from becoming a priest or a priest a warrior. Thus the whole *Rigveda* is evidence that the four castes are not races created separately by God. It is impossible to believe that even the Brāhman are a race distinct from every other Indian race even if certain Brāhman families have kept themselves pure from mixture since 500 B.C., when caste began to be strictly observed in certain quarters, or even since 700 B.C., what about the

¹ *Supra*, p. 160

² *Supra* p. 159

uncounted centuries before then? No one who studies the history of India sincerely can have the slightest doubt that the account given above of the origin of caste is the truth, and that the Hindu theory of special creations is merely a myth formed in order to give greater dignity and meaning to already existing divisions.

The study of ethnology and anthropology has convinced all scientific inquirers that there is no such thing as men of pure race anywhere. There has been immeasurable mixture in all races and in all parts of the world. Men of science are also in complete agreement on this, that the human family is a unity, that there are no species amongst men. Men are divided from the animals, which are their kindred, by an exceedingly deep distinction, but amongst men there is no serious difference at all. The race is one.

It is thus perfectly clear that a modern man cannot believe that the four great castes are distinct species, having each had a separate origin in God. The physical side of the theory of caste purity is altogether untenable.

B. But the Hindu holds that caste distinctions have another basis than physical heredity. He declares that each soul is drafted into that caste for which his spiritual progress has prepared him. A man is born a Brāhman because his soul is far advanced on the way to holiness. The Śūdra is born such because he is far behind the Brāhman, but far in advance of the soul that is born a Pariah or a *mleccha*. There can be no doubt that it is this idea which throughout the centuries has justified caste to the noblest minds of India. Transmigration is the Hindu doctrine of man. The belief that men rise through many spiritual stages to perfection is to the Hindu the deepest of all facts about the human spirit. Caste is thus the natural social expression of transmigration.

This claim, that the four castes are the divinely appointed expression of the progress of souls in spiritual things and, therefore, an infallible index of the religious value of the members of the caste, was refuted very effectively several

centuries ago by a group of Hindu thinkers in South India. Here is a quotation from the Tamil poet Kapilar

In the various lands of the Ottiyas, Mlechchhas, Hunas, Singalese, the slender-waisted Jonakas, Yavanas, and Chinese there are no Brāhmans; but ye have set up in this land a fourfold caste-division as if it were an order distinguished in primal nature. By conduct we distinguished high and low degrees. The bull and the buffalo are unlike of kind, have male and female. Of these two classes ever been seen to unite one with another and breed offspring? Who can see any unlikeness of form between men such as there is between bull and buffalo? In our life, our limbs, our body, hue, and understanding no difference is revealed. A Pulai-man of the south-land who should go to the north and unflaggingly study will be a Brāhman, a Brāhman of the north-land who should come to the south and be warped in his ways will be a Pulai-man. Vasistha, born of a lowly mistress to Brahmā, like a red water-lily springing up in mire, Śakti, born of a Chandāla woman to Vasishṭha, Purāṣara, born to Śakti of a Pulai-woman, Vyāsa, born of a fisher-girl to Parīśana,—all these by study of the Vedas rose to high estate and are famous as holy men. I, Kapilar, with them that were born with me, who are the lineal offspring born to the austere and saintly Bhagavān by the good Pulai-lady Ādi of the great town of Karuvur,—we are in number three males and four females, and hearken to the brief tale of our nurture. Uppai grew up as a dweller in a Vannar household at Uttukadu town. Uuvai was reared in the home of Sanārs, in the toddy-drawers' village at Kaynumpattinam. Auvai was reared in the home of Panars, in the village belonging to the viol-players. Valli grew up on the tan mountain-side where the lordly Kuravars gather their teeming crops. Valluvar was nurtured among the pariahs of pleasant Mailapur in the Tondaimandalam. Adhikaman was reared with a chieftain of Vanji, where blossom the tree-groves and bees swarm. I grew up nurtured by Brāhmans in Arur, the land of gushing streams¹

This is very penetrating reasoning even as it stands, but when we add to it the religious experience of the human race, it becomes overwhelming. Confucius, Christ, Muhammad were *mlechchas*. whence came their moral and spiritual capacity and power, if the karma doctrine be true?

But the real character of the theory becomes plain only when we set Hindu caste historically in its true place in the

development of society in India and in the world. Caste is but one of many forms of social organization which the peoples of India have produced, and although from about 500 B.C. until to-day it has been the dominant form, it did not exist in the preceding millenniums, and is now clearly decaying. In the world-setting it is but one of many attempts—the most brilliant of all, doubtless—yet but one of many attempts made by oligarchies, whether religious or political, to eternalize their own position. To believe that this particular social scheme of all the hundreds which earth has produced is the one divine creation, and that its external relationships reveal with infallible truth the spiritual condition of souls, is altogether impossible for the modern mind. Kapilar's criticism has interested many a reader and raised many a smile, but it never endangered the Brāhman position. The arrival of Western thought, however, is a very different matter. The uplifting of the Outcaste by Christianity is in itself sufficient to overturn the theory.

Thus the doctrine of the spiritual basis of caste-life will not bear one moment's serious consideration any more than the theory of the distinct origin of the great castes in God.

C. It is a remarkable fact that nearly all the national religions of the world distinguished between clean and unclean food, and drew up lists of articles of diet permitted and prohibited. It was a serious religious duty to observe these regulations. Every violation was sinful, polluting the man religiously and rendering him unfit for his usual religious duties and social privileges.

It seems clear that such regulations arose largely in revulsion from the food used by neighbouring peoples. To the ordinary man there are always certain articles in the diet of any race other than his own which seem unclean and horrible, while he regards his own food as pure, healthy, and attractive in every way. Like all the other restrictions of early life, the food law was imposed to protect culture and religion by absolutely excluding what seemed impious polluting revolting

Now can there be any doubt that in the case of the Aryan people in India, surrounded as they were by innumerable tribes of barbarian aborigines, some such regulation was absolutely necessary. A glimpse at the food and the table customs of some of the Outcastes to-day will convince any one that the ancient leaders were quite right when they condemned the diet and forbade social intercourse with the ancestors of these people. Carelessness in these matters would have not only had a most deleterious influence on the culture of the Aryans, but would have probably produced loathsome and devastating disease among them. Prohibition was necessary in self-defence.

But if a prohibition had to be made there was only one way possible in those days—it had to be religious. To all early races there is something mysterious in the eating of food through its connexion with life, and therefore it is a religious matter and under religious rule. Thus, everything that was felt to be injurious was necessarily regarded as religiously unclean. To eat such was a sin.

It was only gradually that men came to form the idea of healthy as opposed to unhealthy food; and, even when they had begun to use the idea, they still continued to avoid the use of what was regarded as unclean, since that was to them a serious religious duty.

In modern times, however, the distinction between the laws of health, on the one hand, and the laws of morality and of spiritual religion, on the other, has, under the teaching of Jesus, become perfectly clear, and there is no reason why any one should confuse them. While in certain climates and for certain constitutions fish may be a healthier food than fowl or meat, or an exclusively vegetarian diet than a diet of both vegetable and animal food, yet no food, whether rice, wheat barley, or oats, fish, fowl, beef, or mutton, is either pure or impure from the point of view of morality or of spiritual religion. Food acts on the bodily tissues, and it is to be judged solely by its physiological results. It is my duty to

keep my body healthy, and I do wrong if I neglect that duty, but I shall never do so by restricting myself to any particular list of foods as religiously clean, but solely by considering individual articles of diet in relation to the needs and the condition of my body. No food is unclean. Material things have no religious index. Religious pollution is a state of the soul, not of the stomach.

Thus the old Hindu rules of food are as much an anachronism to-day as charms for the cure of disease or the belief in witches. No modern man should countenance such regulations. They hamper the Hindu community in many ways and prevent its growth.

D. The rule that a Hindu must not eat with a man of lower caste than his own springs from the same causes as the rule against eating certain foods, and, like it, has overlived its time. It is literally a *superstition*; that is, a rule or belief which was natural and rational to men in an earlier stage of culture, but has survived into a time when there is no further justification for it. As we have already seen, most primitive peoples think it impossible to eat with men of other tribes. Besides this general reason for exclusiveness, it was probably necessary in early days in India, for reasons of health and culture, to prohibit all social intercourse with the aborigines. Any such prohibition in those days necessarily took the form of a religious law. Even if there were only a few customs that were regarded as dangerous and polluting, it was necessary to prohibit intercourse absolutely with the tribes who practised them, because all such customs were religiously binding.

But the inevitable result of the prohibition of all social intercourse with people of certain tribes is that men come to believe that those people are religiously impure and that it is a sin to eat with them, and this result we see before us in India to-day.

But modern men look at these things with other eyes. Science has taught us to be much more careful with regard to right diet, wise cooking, and absolute cleanliness in food than

any ancient people possibly could be, but we have also learned that all such matters are questions of health, not of religion. It may be dangerous for me to dine with a man of a certain tribe, but the danger lies not in the man himself, nor in the fact that he belongs to that tribe, but in the food he offers me, in the unsanitary vessels in which it is cooked, or in the unclean dish, leaf, table, or floor on which it is served. The uncleanness of his food does not make him religiously impure. He may be a good man, though his food is bad. Men of the most degraded races may be civilized and taught to be cleanly in their habits and to use healthy food. Social intercourse then becomes quite possible with them. The uncleanness does not inhere in the race.

Thus the caste law against interdining is a survival from primitive times altogether irrational to-day.

E We need scarcely say a word to prove that the old caste rule as to occupation is altogether indefensible. Through the action of this ancient law India has lost the services of a very large proportion of all the men of genius born in her families. In the higher castes there is a good deal of liberty, but elsewhere there is little or none. Except in the very occasional case when a boy's genius happened to run along the lines of his father's profession, every man of original gift has been forcibly deprived of the opportunity of exercising it. His spirit has been imprisoned, squeezed into the groove of the traditional occupation—like a Calcutta huckster, huddled up with his wares between two houses, his chink scarcely two feet wide by three feet high. How many thousands of gifted boys, born up and down the centuries in the lower castes and among the Outcastes, have been prevented, by the wasteful tyranny of caste, from serving India! Surely the uttermost stretch of human ingenuity would fail to create a system more fatal to initiative and originality, more calculated to turn men into listless, machine-like imitators, than this perpetual succession to the ancestral tread-mill. People complain that the ordinary Indian is unfit for anything

but routine work. It is scarcely surprising. He has been at a single job for two thousand years

The religious idea behind the occupation rule is that a man must do that work for which the precise stage of progress which his soul has reached fits him.¹ A low-caste man, being unspiritual, cannot perform the duty of a priest. A Brāhman, being by birth spiritual, cannot follow the occupation of a Śūdra or a Pañchama without loss of spirituality and the formation of bad karma. Manual labour degrades the spiritual man. This religious belief is no longer held by educated men. Indeed, the higher castes have never kept the occupation law. They have allowed themselves a great deal of liberty. Should not similar liberty be now proclaimed to the others? Behind the wonderful economic progress made by Japan during the last forty years there stands this freedom, necessarily granted when social equality was introduced. Surely, for the sake of India, educated men will not rest until the poorest and the most ignorant of the people have been told that religion does not demand that they shall allow their God-given capacities to run to waste. Let us go at least as far as Napoleon went, and proclaim 'les carrières ouvertes aux talents'.

There is another aspect of the occupation rule which must not be forgotten. In nearly every part of India there are criminal tribes, many of them Hindus. The Thags, whose profession was the strangling and robbery of wealthy travellers, were devout Hindus, and dedicated a percentage of all their plunder to Kālī. According to the rules of caste, it is the duty of boys to follow the occupation of their fathers. According to the rules of the family, the son sins if, when his father bids him follow the old occupation, he refuses.² How are these tribes to be reformed without a contravention of these Hindu principles?

Thus each of the leading conceptions of caste turns out

¹ See especially the *Uttāra*, xviii 41-48 and *supra* p 160

² See p 88

to be an old-world idea which will not bear examination in modern daylight. The reason why educated men all over India are uneasily turning towards modification, reform, or abolition of the system is now apparent, and we can see with perfect clearness why it is that Hindu leaders do not urge the validity of these beliefs to-day. The religious ideas which created caste have faded out of the minds of the educated class.

It is this decay of the religious ideas behind caste that is the explanation of the otherwise incomprehensible fact, that Hindus have been found to declare that caste is a purely social and non-religious system. The modern educated man is so conscious that it is not a matter of religion to himself, but a mere social convention, that a few have actually been able to persuade themselves that it is essentially such.

We are now able to verify the statement made above about the transcendent importance of the decay of faith in the religious basis of the system. Caste spread throughout India and became an atmosphere which no one could escape, because of the power of these far-reaching religious ideas. No mind was beyond their dominance. No society could fail to yield to their influence. But a new and mightier force has now begun to act in India, a set of fresh ideas of overwhelming might, and whoever breathes this new air is unable to hold the old convictions. Nor is there any power on earth that can destroy this new atmosphere, or keep it from spreading through the Hindu community. It is affecting Hindu society at present most vitally at the top and at the bottom. The educated, at the top of the cone, hold by caste organization, but have lost the power to believe in its governing conceptions. The Outcastes, at the bottom, are quickly learning that the system, which for two thousand years has consigned them to dirt and the devil, instead of being the highest religious truth, is utterly false, and they are rapidly escaping from their hideous position. Meanwhile the ordinary Hindu is listening more and more to what the missionary has to say on the subject of the dignity of man and Western civilization.

go on to say that education are steadily pressing the lesson home. One of the most sympathetic of observers remarks

British rule and modern ideas are gradually breaking down the old social system and modifying the religious life of the Hindu¹

The religious basis of caste is clearly dying. But before we attempt to form a judgement as to what is likely to be the outcome of this decay and the changes we have been trying to understand, there are other facts to be taken into consideration.

VIII. These uncertain, uneasy yet insuppressible strugglings of the Indian spirit towards social freedom are but part of a general uprising visible in many quarters of the world to-day. This widespread social unrest has three main aspects, distinct enough to be discussed separately, yet closely connected the one with the other.

The movement seeks first of all *human equality*. There is an impatience manifested with regard to the old race barriers, a distinct wish to see them broken down, in certain aspects of life at least. It appears in politics in India and in Egypt. The whole Congress movement in India and all the criticism of the British Government by the Egyptian press have for their sole justification the assertion of the political equality of the Indian and the European, or of the Egyptian and the Englishman. From the point of view of Hindu or of Muhammadan thought the agitation has no right to exist at all, but Western education has filled thinking men in these countries with the ambition to enjoy the political privileges which Western nations have won for themselves. A similar phenomenon, only taking a different shape because of the different circumstances, has led to unprecedented changes in Turkey, China, and Japan, and in a less degree in Persia and Siam. In all these countries the movement is a democratic one, and, there being no foreign government to attack,

¹ Havel, *Bengal*, 115-116.

political equality is demanded for all citizens of whatever race, religion, or social status

The same spirit appears in another sphere in Turkey and Egypt in the eager agitation that all the different sections of the people may be equal before the law. Men demand that in the elections, in the Parliament and other assemblies, in the law-courts, in the schools and universities, and in the army, all classes of the people shall be considered equal. The British Government in India has been enforcing this principle for well over a century. On every occasion when the principle has been applied to a new sphere by the Government, loud outcries have been raised against it by the conservative section of the population, but nowadays there is no thinking man in India who would raise his voice against the equality which all classes of the people enjoy in the law-courts, in schools and colleges, in Government service, on trains and trams and such like. In certain parts of the country Government has not yet ventured to apply the principle in all its fullness to the Outcastes. But in Bombay advanced opinion has begun to beg the Government to apply the principle in their case in schools. The attempt made by Europeans to treat Indians in South Africa as an inferior caste has raised vehement protests in India, protests which are absolutely justified from the Western standpoint, but very strange indeed when raised by men who defend and practise the caste system.

Lastly, the desire for equality shows itself in the matter of social intercourse. The finest example yet given is that of Japan. Forty years ago all the old caste distinctions were abolished, and the people became socially one. Much of the solid progress which the country has achieved since then is traceable to that remarkable revolution. Within the pale of Hinduism it is only the Social Reform party that call for equality between the castes, but, with a blind yet healthy inconsistency, the high-caste Hindu who will not eat with his low-caste brother Hindu demands in some degree social recognition from Europeans. This too is to be welcomed. In every Orient

and the educated man wishes to dine with the cultured European

The second direction in which this movement tends is towards *complete social freedom*. In Egypt and Turkey educated Muhammadans are now demanding much more freedom in diet and other matters than their ancient laws and customs allow. Many wish to give up the Fast, multitudes of women wish to lay aside the veil, and the most advanced men are eager to have their women appear in public and even take part in social or political events. Far away in China the same spirit is working on other elements of daily life. The cruel system of foot-binding has been an almost universal custom throughout China for many generations. To-day, wherever the spirit of the West has gone, there is a passionate agitation for freedom in this matter. The desire for social freedom has perhaps made more progress in India than in any other Eastern country outside Japan; for Western influence has had a long and powerful reign here. We have seen above how many changes are arising in caste practice, and all towards freedom; and Chapter II showed how much is happening in family matters. The practice of interdining is spreading steadily. The writer had one day the pleasure of travelling in a second-class compartment in Western India along with a party of three business men, a Jew, a Parsee, and a Hindu. Towards evening, the Jew called his servant and got him to lay out the evening meal. All ate together, and at their invitation the writer joined the party. They were intelligent men. Each acknowledged that he was acting in direct infringement of the laws of his religion. No scene could have been more typical of our time or more prophetic of the future.

In the third place, modern social agitation seeks complete *social justice*. The Hindu condemns as unjust the attempt to treat Indians in South Africa as pestilent aliens, and holds that indentured labour, whether in Assam or in the West Indies is immoral. The extreme rudeness of certain Europeans

to Indians on railways and elsewhere is rightly condemned as an offence against social morality. The same spirit is working in the West. The progressive organization of the working classes of Europe and America, the menacing strikes of the last few years, and the rise of militant socialism, all spring from a conviction on the part of the artisans and labourers that they are not receiving social justice. Much of the military activity of the British Empire consists of the police work of compelling semi-savage tribes on our frontiers to adopt a higher moral code in their relations with their neighbours. One of the reasons why Japan was forced open by Commodore Perry sixty years ago was this, that the Japanese were accustomed to murder foreign sailors shipwrecked on their coast. All over the world the establishment of fair and just relations between men is being more and more demanded.

Thus, social evolution is working in these lands towards a form of society in which new principles must rule. The equality of men must be recognized, all non-moral restrictions upon social life must be removed, and our social relations must be regulated by strict justice.

There can be no doubt that all these symptoms of social unrest, appearing in so many far-sundered lands, spring from a single cause, viz. the spread of Western ideas. The influences which are creating the upheaval in India are active wherever the modern spirit has gone. They will inevitably find wider extension and win still greater victories, unless some stronger force is ready to counteract them. But of that there is no sign. Everywhere the methods and the principles of modern life are winning their way with increasing momentum. Many Hindus believe that there is still sufficient resisting power left in caste to carry them through the present distress. If the situation consisted merely in the struggle of one national method of social life against another, there would be considerable reason for hoping that caste would be victorious; but, when we realize that the very men who uphold caste do not believe in the same principles on which it rests, and when

we perceive that, whether in Turkey or Egypt, Persia or China, Japan or India, the modern atmosphere renders the old beliefs utterly incredible, then the ultimate result seems scarcely doubtful.

IX. If, then, the religious basis of caste is fading out of men's minds, we are driven to ask what is to take its place. It is clear that a strong, lasting, social order can be built only on a religious foundation. The whole marvellous history of Hinduism bears this upon its forehead. Apart from the religious character of caste, the Indo-Aryans could never have gathered the races of India into a great religious empire nor could the people have held together through all the storms and changes of three thousand years. The study of religions is steadily revealing the same truth in other spheres. For the purpose of creating a living social order, a living religion is needed. It alone provides moral conceptions of strength and reach sufficient to lay hold of man's conscience and intellect and to compel him to live in society in accordance with them. No lasting society has ever yet been formed on a secular basis. Above all things, nothing but religion will ever provide a force of strength and binding power sufficient to control the turbulent primary passions which in every race and country produce narrow social cliques and vehemently oppose every movement towards equality, freedom, and justice.

The truth of this great principle of social growth stands out more clearly so soon as we realize that each social organism corresponds in character to the leading conceptions of the religion that gave it birth. Caste is the natural outcome of the doctrine of karma and transmigration. The disappearance of all race differences in Islam is the necessary result of the conception of the infinite exaltation of Allah and of the littleness and weakness of man. The dogma, that believers are the objects of Allah's high favour and unbelievers of His utter displeasure expresses itself socially in the enslavement of unbelievers captured in war; and the polygamy, free divorce, and concubinage of Muhammad and his bands are easily intelligible

in view of the Muslim doctrine that women are far inferior to men. The same stringent logical connexion between belief and social organization is visible in all religions.

Where, then, shall we find a religion whose governing conceptions, when they take organized form in society, will incarnate the great principles of the essential equality of all men, the rectitude and high value of complete social freedom, and the obligation of moralizing all social relations. which, we have found, characterize the social agitations of India, Turkey, China, and the other lands at present?

It is a very remarkable fact that these three social principles spring directly from the central doctrine of Christianity, so that, the more seriously Christianity is held, the more fully must society incarnate these ideals.

But a consideration may be urged at this point that would render any appeal to Christ worthless, so we had better deal with it at once. Hindus frequently argue that there is as much caste in England as in India, and therefore that Christianity is no cure for Hindu social evils. Our analysis has shown that the doctrine, that each man is born in that caste for which his past lives have fitted him, gives caste the strongest possible religious sanction and renders Hindu social organization altogether unique. Thus to call the social life of England caste is simply to talk nonsense. On the other hand, every Christian acknowledges with shame and distress that, despite the teaching and example of Christ, in certain sections of Western society there are men and women who show a very large amount of the class and race feeling which lie behind caste, and who practise an exclusiveness that is most offensive and unchristian. But the crucial point is that they are guilty of all this in defiance of their religion, while Hinduism commands the exclusive life which Hindus now recognize to be so antisocial. Thus, as in the chapter on the family, we must again point out that Christianity, like Hinduism, must not be judged by those who refuse to obey it. What we have to inquire is whether Christ taught the principles which under

he healthy social life. We therefore turn now to His teaching.

A. We have already seen that the central thought in the mind of Jesus is the Fatherhood of God, and that in that great doctrine there is contained also Christ's anthropology, the conviction that man, in his spiritual nature, is a finite child made in the image of his infinite Father, and is therefore priceless in worth and deeply loved by God. Since, then, all men have one common origin, Christ can recognize no such thing as caste divisions among them. Being a child of God, every human being has a patent of nobility. There is no such thing as a low-caste man. All are of one caste, for they belong to the family of the ever-blessed Father. Since God is our Father, all men are necessarily brothers. If the Fatherhood is real, the brotherhood is real also. If the very essence of humanity be kinship to God, then men are essentially brothers. All differences are trivial; this is the only thing that matters. That which makes me a man makes every man my brother.

1. Jesus taught this rich truth and the deep obligations it brings in the most moving way. In His great picture of the day of judgement¹ all the nations are gathered before Him, and He separates them into two companies, placing on His right those who have served their fellow men, and on His left those who have failed in the great duty. In this wonderful passage He brings home to us the worth of the most despised men by speaking of them as 'the least of these my brethren'.

2. Holding that all men are children of the Father, Jesus necessarily held that they ought all to be taught about the Father. His message is to be proclaimed to all men.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation²
He could have no doctrine of a special revelation, reserved for a few, as śruti is restricted to the three twice-born castes.³

¹ Matt. 25 31 46 quoted below p 286

² Mark 16, 15-

³ Above p 164.

No one lighteth a lamp and covereth it with a vessel or putteth it under a bed, but placeth it upon a lamp-stand, that they who come in may see the light¹

What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops.²

3 Again, since all men are children of God, there can be no men who are essentially impure and unfit for intercourse. The Jew classed all non-Jews together as Gentiles, and declared them sinners and unclean. No Jew would eat with them. The same rule applied to the Samaritans. There was also a considerable section of the Jewish people in the time of Jesus who did not pretend to keep the Jewish religious law strictly. In consequence, the leaders declared them to be sinners, and forbade orthodox Jews to eat with them. Finally, leprosy was believed to be a disease inflicted by God as a punishment for sin. Hence the Jews not only adopted the wise precaution of avoiding close intercourse with the leper for fear of contagion, but drove him out of society and pronounced him religiously unclean, and therefore untouchable.

Jesus taught, on the contrary, that there are no walls of division between the races of mankind. On one occasion, in answer to a teacher of the Jewish law, he gave as a compendium of duty the twin precepts, 'Love God supremely,' 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' The teacher at once asked, 'Who is my neighbour?' and Jesus replied with the following story.

A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down that way and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he

¹ Luke 8 16.

² Mat 10 27

took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more I, when I come back again will repay thee Which of these three thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said He that shewed mercy on him And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise¹

Thus Jesus teaches, in full accordance with the truth of the Fatherhood of God, that the man who needs your help is your neighbour, no matter what race he may belong to

But Jesus felt that these superstitious rules could not be broken down by mere words, but only by revolutionary practice. Hence He habitually ate with the 'sinners' whom no Jew would have anything to do with, to the great scandal of the leaders and the orthodox.

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with the publicans and sinners?²

Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him for to hear him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them³

And he entered and was passing through Jericho. And behold a man called by name Zaccheus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich And he sought to see Jesus who he was, and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner⁴

His practice in this matter was so well known that His enemies used it to make biting sarcasms about Him

A glutton and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners⁵

The answers of Christ to their reproaches are full of instruction. On one occasion He said,

¹ Luke 10 30-37 See below v 45
² Luke 15 1-2 ³ Luke 19 1-7

⁴ Mat 9 10-11
⁵ Matt. 11, 19.

They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what this meaneth, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice'. for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners¹

On another He gave utterance to the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of Money and the Prodigal Son². The great principles expressed in these replies are (a) that these people are very dear to God; (b) that they are at present 'lost', 'sick', far away from their Father; (c) that it is possible to save them; (d) that in order to save them, it is necessary to seek their society. These rich religious truths, which have proved so mightily living and effective in many lands since the time of Christ, and are now proving of transcendent value to the Outcastes of India provide an immovable ethical foundation for treating the most degraded peoples of the earth as human brothers. So soon as a man is grasped by these truths, it becomes impossible for him to believe in the Hindu laws against interdining. Christ dining with publicans and sinners has once for all rendered these customs irrational, obsolete in the modern world. He sets the Hindu free in the matter of eating with men of other castes, religions, and races.

4. But Christ's principles do not merely make it possible for us to eat with men of any race they make it a duty for the religious man. Brotherly social intercourse is one means whereby our brothers may be raised. He who knows and enjoys in his own life the love of the Heavenly Father, cannot but wish to use this means to save His lost sheep.

5. There is another incident in the life of Jesus which is full of significance for India.

So he cometh to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph and Jacob's well was there, Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink

of me, which am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans) Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water¹

Thus, as Jesus was ready to eat with any child of His Father, He was ready to take water from any human hand. The love of the Heavenly Father will open Hindu eyes to the truth that no man is unclean, that water, that great gift of the Father, is not polluted by coming from the hand of the humblest of His children, but comes none the less filled with His love and blessing.

6. But the most moving of all incidents in this connexion is Christ's meeting with the 'Outcaste', 'Unclean', 'Untouchable' leper.

And there cometh to him a leper, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And being moved with compassion, he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will, be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean²

Jesus usually healed with a word, and He felt as we do the repulsiveness of leprosy; but He knew that the leper had been excommunicated, that he had to call out 'Unclean' as he walked along the road, and that no kindly human hand had been laid on his shoulder for years; so He not only cleansed but touched him. The problem of the Untouchables of India was solved that day. What sort of men would Christians be, if, having such a Master, they did not go to seek the Outcaste?

The Fatherhood of God as taught by Jesus thus forms precisely the religious foundation that is wanted for the social law of the equality of all men. No man can hold the Fatherhood as taught by Jesus and believe that men are of different species. If all men are not recognized as social equals, then the brotherhood of men, even if it be nominally accepted, is

not made the essence of humanity, but is pushed aside by some other consideration

Hindus recognize that man is related to God, and they are learning to speak of the brotherhood of men, but, according to all Hindu teaching, man is related to God in precisely the same way as every other form of life, whether vegetable or animal, is, so that to the Hindu it is not the divine relationship that is significant, but the stage of progress which the soul, whether in plant, animal or man, has reached. That is of infinite importance and in the case of man is registered in caste; and a man's place in caste is not only the reward of past achievement but also the starting-point of all his future progress in the things of the spirit. Thus the inevitable social outcome of Hindu theology is caste; just as the inevitable social outcome of the teaching of Christ is equality.

It is of the utmost importance to recognize frankly that, if we consider men from the point of view of physique, mental capacity, education, efficiency, culture, attainments, character, they are very far from equal. So long as we take any one or all of these things as the essentials of humanity, to speak of equality is sheer nonsense. There are two articles side by side in the *Hindustan Review* for August, 1912, in which equality is ridiculed; and rightly so, from the standpoint of the writers. It is only on the basis of the serious faith that each man is a child of God, spiritual, priceless, dearly beloved, that one can look the whole world in the face and say with reason and conviction, All men are equal. That is the sole justification possible of the political equality of European and Indian, of the uplifting of the Outcaste, of social equality, of democracy.

B. One of Christ's leading thoughts about those who have recognized the Fatherhood of God is their freedom. Perhaps the most vivid piece of teaching is found in the passage quoted above¹ in which the idea is that the sons of God are free from the Temple tax. But their freedom has many forms. The

most noteworthy proof of the stress which Jesus laid on the principle is the fact, which we have already dealt with,¹ that He laid down no detailed law for His followers, but left them to form systems of conduct for themselves, bidding them only remain loyal to the spiritual principles which He taught.

1. We have already seen that the universality of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God necessarily sets the Christian free in all his intercourse with men, and that Christ has taught us by His example also that we may eat with any one, receive water from any one, and touch any human being. We next notice that He has also given us freedom in the matter of food :

And he called to him the multitude again, and said unto them, Hear me all of you, and understand: there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man. And when he was entered into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked of him the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him: because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught? This he said, making all meats clean. And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man.²

There is thus no food that is unclean in itself.

2. In the matter of occupation also, we have freedom. Since the human race is the family of God, every piece of work that is necessary for our welfare is worth doing and bears no stigma. The toil of the artisan, the ploughman, the cooly, the shop-keeper, aye the scavenger, is worthy of all honour. This ennobling truth Jesus taught by His example; for He toiled for some eighteen years as a carpenter. Thus only in Christ are our Brāhmans justified who sell hides, or make soap, or struggle to start some other industry to-day. Christ has taught us the nobility of the service of humanity.

In the teaching and life of Jesus, then, we have the religious foundation for a society characterized by freedom.

Does it not seem, as if in all these acts and words He must have been thinking of India?

C But these two principles—equality and freedom—standing by themselves would create social chaos. They generate life and health only when they are fully controlled by the righteous will of the Heavenly Father. They must be completely moralized. But here again the central conception suffices: since we are brothers, we must act as true brothers in all things. In Christ's moralization of our social relations two distinct ideas rule.

1. First, in all our relations with our fellow men we must be just. Our Father in heaven can be satisfied with nothing less than *equal justice between man and man*, whatever their race, creed, or social position may be, the very reverse of the Hindu law, that each man must be dealt with according to caste.¹ It prohibits everything in the nature of aggression or unfairness. Brotherhood makes lies, slander, oppression, theft, adultery, murder impossible: a true man can do a brother no wrong. Christ's loftiest indignation is roused by men who profess to lead a religious life and yet are guilty of unrighteousness in their social relations. To Him they are hypocrites of the coarsest fibre:

And Peter said, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all? And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken, the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful.²

Beware of the scribes which desire to walk in long robes, and love

¹ *Supra* p. 64

² Luk. 12. 41-46

salutations in the marketplaces, and chief seats in the synagogues and chief places at feasts, which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater condemnation.¹

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgement, and mercy and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain out the gnat and swallow the camel!²

Christ's teaching that men are brothers and must deal with each other in strict justice is the only possible dynamic of reform in the modern world. To that we owe the prohibition of the slave-trade, the abolition of slavery, the cleansing of prisons, the amelioration of the conditions of labour, the temperance movement, the acknowledgement that Britain is responsible for the welfare and the progress of the people of India. Hence has Britain put down corruption among her Indian civilians and enforced equality in the law-courts. Hence also the abolition of sati and of cruel religious rites, and the prohibition of gross obscenity. As we have already seen, it is from the spirit of Christ that the whole reform movement in India has arisen.

Without this universal ethical postulate, that equal justice shall be done between man and man, whatever their race, religion, wealth, or position, healthy modern life is utterly impossible, and, so long as the caste system stands, such equality is altogether unattainable.

2. Secondly, to a brother I owe, not only strict justice, but all the help that he needs and that I can give. *Service according to need* is Christ's second moral principle for the social life. If every human being is of priceless value to my Father, as priceless as I am myself, then I must do all in my power to uplift those around me from suffering and degradation. Philanthropy is not an extra to be taken up or laid aside according to whim, but a duty of the utmost obligation.

¹ Luke 20 46-47

² Mat 23 24

This principle is dealt with below,¹ so that we need not spend time over it now.

Christ thus provides the necessary religious foundations for a society characterized by equality, freedom, and strict justice. Social evolution all over the world is steadily tending in the direction of these Christian ideals,² and the needs of modern men will inevitably increase the rate of the movement. Universal intercourse necessarily demands a universal society, complete social liberty, and a social morality of depth and strength sufficient to bear the unparalleled strain of the new state of affairs. Nothing but a conception of human brotherhood which contains within itself these liberties and obligations is equal to the creative task. Thus Christian society is the evolutionary goal of all living forms of society and of all the social unrest and agitation of our day.

But there is another important observation to make. These three outstanding features of the modern social movement—the demands for complete social equality, for full social freedom, and for real justice in our social relationships—are simply the culmination of what we found to be the characteristics of all social progress in the ancient world, viz a wider society, greater freedom and fuller moralization. Society, made as wide as the race, would give the social equality which the modern man wants, and the removal of the last barrier to freedom and the bringing of every social relationship under moral categories would secure the complete liberty and the social justice which all now desiderate. The evolution of society will thus reach its highest possible form under the guidance of Christian principles.

In so far, then, as India shows to-day social phenomena analogous to those found in Egypt, Turkey, Persia, China, and Japan, it is clear that the goal in view is a society inspired by the truths of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. Only a society built on these heavenly

principles can meet the needs of modern India. Only by such breadth of law can the Indian nation come into being.

X But there is a further question which we may well raise, whether the specific ideals to which the caste system has given such emphatic expression are likely to be lost in the vast social upheaval on the verge of which we stand, or will find clear re-expression in the new world-society, whether aspects of social life which were neglected even in Greece and Rome, but have been seriously insisted on in India, will blossom and bear fruit in the new society or are doomed to extinction. Hindu convictions on the subject of caste may be summed up under four heads.

A The working principle of the caste system is *the dependence of duty and privilege on birth*, in fact *naisance oblige*, if we may remould the fine old watchword. The Brāhman alone may undertake priestly duties. Only the twice-born may hear the words of revelation and press on to release. Only the four groups of castes are fit for ordinary intercourse; all others are unclean.

But there have been many notable strainings of the Hindu spirit towards wider things.

The *Gītā* opened the doors of spiritual religion to women and to Śūdras,¹ and the bhakti sects opened them to Outcastes.² But, while it was acknowledged that women, Śūdras, and even Outcastes were spiritual enough to win emancipation, nay, to become teachers of spiritual things and to be worshipped as saviours, yet the doors were shut in their faces for everything else.³ The Outcaste is still untouchable, a thing of horror to the Brāhman. Experience has shown that they can grasp spiritual things; but their birth remains; and over that impassable barrier no true Hindu dare step.

The Vīṇa Śaiva sect was founded in opposition to Brāhman privilege and caste distinctions; when the Silhas became

¹ See below, p. 371.

² See below pp. 387-99.

³ See below pp. 399-400.

a military order, they gave up caste; and the founder of the Ārya Samāj condemned caste with unsparing voice; yet all these bodies are in chains to-day, fast bound by that which they originally repudiated.

Some far-sighted Hindus have started the Depressed Classes Mission, and many would like to give help, but they are restrained by the suspicion, which is in truth well founded, that all such work undermines Hinduism.

The caste belief is that a Brāhman who eats with a Śūdra, an Outcaste, or a Mleccha suffers serious spiritual pollution. But the modern educated Hindu knows from experience that he is helped instead of injured by dining with the right type of Śūdra, Outcaste, Christian, Parsee, or Muhammadan.

Caste belief as taught in the *Gītā* runs that it is better for a Brāhman to do bad work as a priest than to do excellent work as a doctor, a manufacturer, an engineer, or a business man.¹ while the modern Hindu sees plainly that India is dying from the work of its bad priests and being rejuvenated by its Brāhman manufacturers and its Outcaste educationalists.

Many a Hindu to-day sees that the restrictions of caste are very bad for Hindu society, but, still dominated by the religious belief that it is wrong to neglect the ancient laws founded on birth he chooses to suffer loss in this world rather than risk a frightful punishment in the next.²

How is Hinduism to be set free from this haunting influence, which, despite the highest yearnings of her thinkers and leaders, steals over every community within the fold and binds it in chains which paralyses the educated man in spite of both conscience and experience, which keeps the simple-minded Hindu from doing what he sees to be for the good of his people?

Christ is the Liberator, for by means of the truth about human birth he will set the Hindu free from caste. He does

¹ See above p 160.

² See what Ranade says above, pp 17-8

not degrade the Brahman to the level of the Outcaste, but reveals the high truth that the savage, the cannibal, and the Outcaste are all Brāhmans and more. Every human unit has the supreme dignity and capacity of a child of the Most High. When this ennobling truth breaks in upon the sensitive Hindu spirit there will be no more terror and paralysis of soul at the thought of intercourse with others.¹ It will then become clear that there is no reason why people of different castes should not marry, provided they are really well matched in other respects; for they are all of the highest birth. Hindus will then gladly dine with Outcastes, as Jesus did. They will rejoice to recognize in every man a Brāhman, for, as children of God, we are all fit for the priestly work of offering spiritual sacrifices.

Thus, under Christ, birth is still the key to life; the high rule, *naissance oblige*, remains the health of society and the progress of mankind depend upon our living up to our lofty duties and privileges as children of God.

B. The Hindu is profoundly impressed with *the sacredness of the social order*. Our study has made it abundantly clear to us that every element of caste has a religious basis and bears a religious significance. This is the secret of the invincible pervasive power it has shown throughout India, and also of its unparalleled grip on the Hindu spirit. Hence, to the Hindu, every rule and custom of caste is inviolably sacred. Indeed, nothing is more remarkable in this remarkable religion than the lofty conception the people have of the divine social order and the boundless reverence with which they regard it. As the thoughtful Hindu contemplates the stately social edifice, planned by divine wisdom from all eternity and linked adown the centuries by unerring righteousness with the spiritual progress of millions of transmigrating souls, he cannot but believe that its scrupulous preservation

¹ *I. S. R.*, April 20, 1913 p. 397, shows how even educated and progressive Hindus who believe in equality shrink from intercourse with Outcastes.

from wrong is the highest of all duties. By virtue of their place in the social order and of their faithful performance of all the details of the traditional law of the order, the Hindu people regard themselves as holy and as vowed to the faithful upbuilding of the divine society to which they belong. The maintenance of the divine society is called *dharma*, the Hindu ideal of social order and righteousness.

Since, to the Hindu, caste is a divine institution which he is bound to revere and maintain, he regards the Christian missionary as a coarse, irreverent, social iconoclast, laying impious hands on that which he can neither appreciate nor understand, and as altogether incapable himself of building anything in place of the thrice-noble edifice which he seeks to pull down. To Hindus Christian society seems at first utter chaos—race confusion in conspiracy with wild licence. Such thoughts are quite natural when men do not understand. This chapter, however, will have made it clear that the social order is as truly divine to the Christian as it is to the Hindu. Every detail of it is a reflex from the Fatherhood of God. Every social duty is transfigured in the light of His love for man. The sacramental note is everywhere, for in doing the humblest duty to my brother I touch my Father's hand.

Nay, the truth is that society is more sacred to the Christian than to the Hindu. It is possible for the Hindu householder to cast aside all the duties and obligations of the family and society. By becoming a *sannyāsī* he rises to a plane of life where social obligations no longer hold.¹ Within the bounds of human life there is a sphere in which the divine society does not exist. No such idea is possible to the Christian. The married man can never, while he lives, lay aside his duty to his wife. The father never ceases to be responsible for his children. Nothing on earth or in heaven can ever absolve me from my common duty to my brother men. The closer I cling to Christ, the more seriously do my social

¹ See below pp. 267-3.

duties rise upon my heart and conscience; for His example and His teaching equally stir us to a faithful social life. The deeper my faith is that God is my Father, the more conscious I am that the human race is His family, and that He is toiling and suffering to create the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Thus, the Hindu consciousness of the sacredness of society will find a higher and wider sphere under Christ than in caste.

C. Hindu social life aims above all things at the *preservation of solidarity and of purity*.

The Hindu is most sensitively conscious of the need of a settled, well-balanced, self-sufficient community, and he believes it cannot be maintained apart from caste. How could men get work, prices and wages be regulated, skill and learning be preserved from generation to generation? The poor must be helped, the sinful restrained, enemies kept at a distance. How, without caste, would true mutual responsibility be maintained? Thus, on the faithful performance of all that the ancient rules enjoin depend the health and stability of the whole community.

In Christ we have not the narrow caste-group within which solidarity is comparatively easy to achieve, but we have the wider society which modern India needs, and ethical teaching of the greatest depth and power to make solidarity real. Towards the working out of the new national solidarity every patriotic Hindu now strains. But how is it to be accomplished? Only through Christ's conceptions of brotherhood, social justice, and social service. The bringing in of the Outcastes, the gathering in of the wild tribes, and the building out of all the races of India, of a united and holy nation is a task that may well stir the noblest heart. Can Hindus stand by and see the alien missionary achieve this glorious enterprise? From the unexampled variety of Indian race and life, in the new rich conditions of the twentieth century, and with Christ's thought of the Kingdom as guide and plan, what manner of work may Indians not accomplish? Here is

a sphere in which Christ gives an ideal of solidarity far beyond the dreams of caste.

To the Hindu, caste is the stronghold of purity, manners, culture, and of the whole religious heritage of the race. The high-caste man thinks of himself as one of a small number of pure-blooded, cultured, religious men amidst such vast numbers of unclean, vulgar, vicious people that the light is in grave danger of extinction. Aeneas-like, he bears through seething crowds of foes his ancestral heritage, bound by every duty to pass it on intact to those who follow him. Only in caste can he preserve from wrong the sacred trust of his fathers, that deposit of custom, practice, and law which regulates his religion, morals, and habits. It is this heritage which has made him what he is. In every act he does and every thought he thinks he is conscious of its influence. Each caste has its own distinct tradition. Amongst Brāhmans to this day the standard of cleanliness, speech, and behaviour is far higher than in other castes. It is impossible to simulate the Brāhman. A hundred trifles would betray the pretender. Feeling runs still deeper with regard to the rites of religion, the great doctrines of the faith, and the Vedānta. How can these survive if caste be tampered with? To allow these to be shared by low-born, ignorant men would be to court not only contamination but destruction.

Christ is as eager for purity, manners, culture, and spiritual religion as the holiest Hindu ever was, but He has another method for their preservation. The whole of the old world believed that truth and wisdom were so precious that they ought to be restricted to the few. But Christ holds that the only way to preserve truth is to spread it broadcast, that the only way to secure the triumph of wisdom and righteousness is to speak them out to all men and to trust to their own vitality for their survival. So with culture and manners. To tolerate multitudes of ignorant and vulgar men is to prepare an avalanche to overwhelm culture. The wider culture and good breeding are spread the more secure they are. Hence Christ's words

What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops.¹

Will not Hindus make it their ideal to bring the gentle manners, the cleanliness, and the pleasing speech of the Brāhman to the humblest Indian? Would such a consummation be dishonouring to the Hindu community? So with all truth. Every Indian, since he is a man, is heir to all the spiritual truth which the human race holds. We only bring him into his own estate when we tell him of his heavenly Father. Can we think of a more ennobling piece of work than the task of teaching every Indian the highest religious truth? The new social life in Christ is the real stronghold of culture and truth.

D In Christ even the more detailed ideals of caste find fulfilment. The Brāhman is the man of prayer and sacrifice, the man who has direct access to God in Christ Jesus this is every man's birthright. Every man and every woman is fit to be a priest of God, to offer spiritual sacrifice, to have unceasing, personal intercourse with the heavenly Father. The Śūdra was bid serve the three castes. Christ, who came not to be served but to be a servant,² shows us that the true man is a servant of his fellow men. The Śūdra ideal, as well as the Brāhman ideal, is universalized in Him.

The Hindu holds that even the men who are by birth spiritually fit for the highest privileges, viz the Brāhman, the Kshatriya and the Vaiśya, cannot enter upon these privileges until they have passed through a second birth. Originally, this sacred birth consisted in a long course of religious training and discipline, and an infinitesimal minority still take the course; but for the vast majority it has shrunk to the ceremony of initiation.³ That which was originally so great has become an empty bubble shaming its high name.

But turn to Christ. Here the second birth is conversion, a revolution within the soul, a spiritual transformation of the

man. Only he who undergoes the overturning change of repentance forgiveness and union with Christ, enters upon the privileges of the kingdom of heaven. But the change is open to every one. Any child of God may yield to the influences of the Holy Spirit, repent of his past life, surrender to Christ, and through Him enter by the portal of the second birth into the new life. That which in Hinduism has become a formal ceremony is in Christ a spiritual reality.

CHAPTER V

THE ESSENTIALS OF HINDUISM

I. WHEN the invading Aryans entered India they merely sought lands on which to settle and live. For a considerable length of time they were content with small things. But gradually there arose among them the imperial instinct, and as a result they became masters, politically and religiously, of the whole of North India, and, at a later date, of the South also.

In the course of their gradual conquest of the North the simple religion of the *Rigveda* was transformed into Hinduism. The thought and culture of the invaders were spontaneously advancing, the impact of the innumerable tribes of aborigines with their varied religions and modes of life necessarily brought them much fresh material and vital quickening, while their new imperial position demanded a practical system applicable to their subjects as well as to themselves. In these circumstances a new set of beliefs arose and a new social and religious organization took form. Hinduism, the religion of India, was born. Innumerable changes have taken place since then; but they have all been within the lines of the original plan; they have all been branches of the primeval tree.

Our study of the life of the early Indo-Aryans left us with several ideas clearly defined before our minds. Their religion was a polytheistic worship of the powers of nature by means of prayer, hymn and sacrifice, but without temples or images. We also found a few traces of a more spiritual faith

and of philosophic speculation. The worship of ancestors held a large place in their minds and in their social organization. To this simple people the world was real and life was good. Men prayed to live a hundred years. Asceticism was unknown. The family was still in a healthy condition. There was no caste. There was no doctrine of transmigration. Man lived and died once, and after death was led by Yama to heaven, where he enjoyed an immortality of bliss with the 'fathers' and the gods. From this simple system was developed the elaborate theology and highly organized community of Hinduism.

It was the doctrine of karma and rebirth that gave character and form to the new system. While on the surface it is but a theory of birth and death, it is essentially the Hindu moral theory, and, as we have already seen, it enters as an element into every part of the religion.

There was another doctrine which proved of importance in the creation of the new thought, but it did not exercise such an influence as the transmigration theory did. The idea is that there exists one supreme divine Being, eternal and unknowable who is manifested in all the gods and all the religions of men. He is spiritual and real, he is in nature and in man, he is the cause of all things, the Veda and caste included. In a sense, he is all things; and yet he is free from karma, which controls all things. Since he stands apart from karma, he is actionless. Being unknowable, he cannot be worshipped, but, since he is manifested in all the gods, the worship of any god is quite legitimate. The Brāhmans thus developed a simple philosophy of religion which they used to explain matters to themselves and to all eager inquirers, as they proceeded with their work of bringing the peoples of India under their influence. They must have met with many forms of religion some of them very strange indeed as they extended their sway over the land; yet every form of belief and every cult could be brought under this simple formula. It is this idea of the one God behind all the gods which the

Hindu villager uses to-day when any one asks him why he acknowledges many gods

But the more clearly they envisaged the Supreme as real, the more worthless the world became to them. Thus, ever since these ideas took form, the Hindu has held that all worldly things are vain valueless, empty as compared with God. The doctrine that all material things are illusion is a much later development, and is not a necessary part of essential Hinduism, but the worthlessness of the world is one of the central ideas of the religion.

But while in comparison with God the world was seen to be paltry, in the light of the doctrine of karma and rebirth, it was held to be eternal, coeval with God. It was a transitory, phenomenal system, completely controlled by karma, yet without beginning and without end. The course of the world's history is a continuous process of degeneration from the Golden down to the Iron age. Progress is impossible. But when things reach their worst, the whole world passes into invisibility and lies in peace and silence for countless ages, and, when it is re-manifested, things are once more at their best.

All souls, whether living as gods, demons, men, animals, or plants, are afloat on the stream of transmigration (*samsāra*). Their life is at once retribution for the past and opportunity for the future. But, though a man may rise by persistent good conduct, by sacrifice and austerity, to the highest position among men or even to the station of a god, release from the ever-whirling wheel of birth and death is not to be won by an ordinary life, but only by stepping out of the common course of existence into the life of world-renunciation.

The gods may be worshipped, in accordance with the old cult, by means of sacrifice, prayer, and hymn, conducted in the open air, or by means of temple and image; but, whether the old or the new method is followed, only a Brāhman is allowed to officiate as priest and the Vedas must be acknowledged as the one Revelation. It must be noted however

that the old cult is open only to the three twice-born castes, and no woman can sacrifice without her husband, while all Hindu temples are open to the four castes and to women as well as men.¹

Caste is the Hindu form of social organization. No man can be a Hindu who is not in caste, and if a group of outsiders is admitted into the community, they must organize themselves as a caste.

In the times of the *Rigveda* there were schools for young priests. These grew in importance with the growth of the ritual and of the power of the priests. More and more literature had to be mastered by the priestly student. Only the Brāhman could teach, and only men of the three highest castes were admitted to the schools. All women were excluded. During this period of reconstruction it became the custom to send every boy of the Brāhman, Kshatriya, and Vaisya castes to school to receive the sacred education. Each boy underwent initiation before beginning his course. Nowadays very few indeed receive the old education.

This radical system was held by the Brāhmins and taught by them, in whole or in part, according to circumstances, as they pursued their work of subjugating the races of India to their authority. The ignorant were taught only as much as was necessary to enable them to take their place in the great organization, but, when thinking men asked questions, an answer was ready for them. This system of thought and life will not be found in this cut-and-dried form, separated from all else, in any Hindu manual, yet it lies behind every form of Indian religion and philosophy which appears on the stage of history throughout the centuries. In Buddhism, Jainism, the Sāṅkhya philosophy and the great sects, one or other element has been somewhat modified, yet the forms of these systems would scarcely be comprehensible to us, did we not know the great ancestor from which they sprang.

II. The leading constituents of this system will be found to

fit very well together. If we hold that the invisible God behind all things takes no part in the activity of the phenomenal universe then we can readily believe that the whole world is destitute of worth and substance. Again, if the world is so distinctly a vain show it is not unnatural to think that souls, once caught in its meshes, may live beclouded and dazzled for ages, finding no way back to the divine Source, until their blind eyes are opened to see through the shows of Time to the one Reality. In these circumstances caste appears at once reasonable and right, as marking stages of the soul's progress towards enlightenment. The advance of the soul is of so much moment that the social system may well be made stern and unyielding, in order to conserve gains as they are made, and the spiritual advancement which is believed to lie behind the birth of every Brāhman is quite a reasonable basis for the religious authority which is demanded for him. Similarly, the conception that the Veda is the eternal utterance of the divine Mind, revealed anew in divers portions to the Rishis at the opening of every world-era, is a reasonable ground for the practical authority claimed for it.

Perhaps the most noticeable thing about the system is the way in which it fits practically into the circumstances of the time. It is, first of all, the old system to which the people were accustomed, for it is the religion of the *Rigveda*, yet it is so transformed as to satisfy the intellect of the most advanced Aryans of the day. It is, on the other hand, a philosophy of religion, which enables the grossest of the pagan cults of the aborigines to be included in the same imperial system with the highest speculations of philosophy and with the elaborate sacrificial performances of the Brāhmins. Had there been no caste to bind the people together, the speculative religious ideas would have been ineffectual, while, without the doctrine of transmigration, caste would have had no intellectual or moral justification and could have never laid hold of the popular conscience.

The strength and greatness of the whole group of ideas will be at once apparent. The thought of the worthlessness of the world in contrast with the glory and spirituality of Brahman is one that lays hold of the intellect and has many interests for philosophy. The emptiness of the world is a powerful moral conception, and has been one of the chief sources of all the forms of spiritual religions which India has exhibited during the centuries. Every religion has found it necessary to persuade man to seek emancipation from the power of the sense-world. Hinduism has no need to search for reasons to support this teaching. It springs inevitably from the Hindu conception of things. Then, on the other hand, if the system deprives the world of all claim to final reality, the doctrine of transmigration and karma expresses in the most powerful way possible its actuality and its grip over the human spirit. The unbending, remorseless law of karma has a cosmic grandeur and a kind of scientific completeness about it which at first sight are very captivating. Given these conceptions, the elaborate organization and the strict rules of caste appeal to the thinking mind as an orderly and reasonable system.

Here then, we have the Hindu world-theory in all its permanent essentials. God real, the world worthless, the one God unknowable, the other gods not to be despised; the Brāhmans with their Vedas the sole religious authority, caste a divine institution, serving as the chief instrument of reward and punishment, man doomed to repeated birth and death, because all action leads to rebirth, world-flight the only noble course for the awakened man and the one hope of escape from the entanglements of sense and transmigration.

III. We have been accustomed to think of Hinduism as an unchanging system, the home of all the conservatism. Now, it is very true that the Hindu seeks to live in most things precisely as his ancestors lived centuries ago, yet conservatism and stagnation are not the whole story. In Hinduism there are many large freedoms. To the European these

liberty at first sight worthless: the Hindu seems to be free where he ought to be bound and bound where he ought to be free. Yet, rightly or wrongly, there are these freedoms, and, in order to understand Hinduism and its working, it is most necessary to realize what parts of Hindu life are free and what parts are under stern regulation. In this chapter we isolate the things which are regarded by the Hindu as eternal, and therefore as allowing of no liberty.

The ordinances to which a Hindu must conform fall into three groups: the family, caste, and religion.

A. An orthodox Hindu must have been born in a Hindu family, must have undergone all the necessary ceremonies as a child and young man, and must continue to live as a member of his family, obeying all the regulations and fulfilling all the duties of a householder. These duties include the family rites mentioned in our second chapter, viz. the sacraments, the worship of ancestors, the worship of the family gods, and the observance of the annual feasts and seasons of worship. If he is a twice-born Hindu, he ought also to observe daily, morning and evening, the prescribed ablutions, prayers and offerings.

B. An orthodox Hindu must have been born in a Hindu caste, must have undergone initiation if he is a Brāhman, Kshatriya, or Vaiśya, or some other equivalent ceremony if he belongs to a lower caste; and he must continue to observe all the rules and regulations which are traditional in his own caste, as was set forth in Chapter IV.

C. An orthodox Hindu must worship the gods either in the old Vedic fashion or in the temples. He must acknowledge the Vedas as the one revelation, and he must employ Brāhmans for all priestly duties, whether in his home or elsewhere. No one but a Brāhman can sacrifice, conduct religious ceremonies, act as a religious teacher, or proclaim the law.

All this, then, is obligatory on the Hindu. In these matters he is bound. The observance of these laws and customs is

called *dharma*, i.e. right conduct. *Dharma* is explained and discussed in detail in the books known as *Dharmaśāstras*, the greatest of which is the *Mānava Dharmaśāstra* or code of Manu. Here is what is laid down on this point by the highest authorities. We quote the *Gītā* first:

Therefore, realizing the *śāstra* to be the standard for determining right and wrong, thou should'st do here the works specified in the ordinances of the *śāstra*.¹

Then Śāṅkara:

The knowledge of one action being right and another wrong is based on scripture only.²

The liberties of the Hindu are outside the circle of *dharma*. A man may remain an orthodox Hindu without believing in any god or any theology, and without knowing or reading any sacred book. He may be a Christian, a Muhammadan, an agnostic or an atheist in his convictions. No question is raised so long as he conforms to usage.

¹ xvi 24.

² S B E, xxxviii. 131

CHAPTER VI

THE SUMMIT OF INDIAN THOUGHT

If a cultured Hindu were asked to select the loftiest aspect of his religion, there can be little doubt that he would name the Vedānta philosophy. To that, therefore, this chapter will be given. In order to understand it, we shall have to trace its history in outline.

I. There are a number of philosophic hymns in the *Rigveda* and also in the *Atharvaveda*, and some of the ideas suggested in them reappear in later philosophy; but, for the purpose we have in view here, it will suffice if we begin our survey with the conceptions expressed in the Brāhmaṇas. Amid the innumerable speculations and guesses scattered through these priestly works two are worthy of all attention.

The first conception is Brahman, which by derivation is connected with the idea of sacred utterances, whether hymn or prayer, but which in the Brāhmaṇas is thought of as the one source of the visible universe. Brahman was called the source of all things, the Creator and the Ruler of the universe.

The other concept is Ātman, which means self. At first the word was used in various senses, but gradually it came to stand more distinctly for the conscious thinking power, whether in man or in the universe. There was no sharp distinction between the self in man and the Self of the universe. The idea seems to have been that of an all-pervading consciousness, which appears in each man as a speck of light, the thought-power within him, while remaining the Self of the universe. This concept, like Brahman, the reality of the

universe, was used to explain the world. The Ātman was spoken of as the Creator and the Controller of the world.

There were thus the two outstanding conceptions, Brahman and the Ātman, each of which had been declared the source of all things. Brahman, however, had been reached objectively, by considering the world as a system of nature subject to religious influences, while it was the inner psychical world which had given birth to the conception of the universal Ātman.

Next came the moment when some thinker combined them, saying, 'Brahman is the Ātman' The source of all things thus came to be definitely recognized as intelligent, psychical. The Brahman-Ātman was regarded as the secret of the universe, and as present in every man. The identification of the two would greatly stimulate thought, and the consciousness, unity, universality, and divine character of Brahman-Ātman would gradually rise in men's minds and receive clearer definition.

The Ātman was further defined in contrast with the gods. These early thinkers watched the religious life around them and saw that each god was conceived as eager to receive the homage and the sacrifices of men, and in order to receive them was ready to give men gifts in return. Each god was thus an individual spirit, having his own selfish interests, and was subject to motives similar to those that rule men. Hence the Ātman was conceived as free from desire, and, therefore, not liable to be tempted by the sacrifices of men. He was desireless, actionless, at peace.

There is no doubt that these thinkers had lighted on a most difficult problem. Turn to the religions of Egypt, Babylonia, Greece, or Rome, and you will find that the above description is true of their gods. They listen to praise and prayer, and are responsive to human need, but they quarrel about the things of earth, intrigue to get the support of men, and show the vilest passions. This is true even of the mighty Zeus of Greek poetry, who is conceived as the Supreme and so named

The formation of this developed conception of the spiritual Reality behind the world necessarily modified thought in other directions. The world began to appear changeful and ordinary in the light of the thought of the spiritual, invisible, unchangeable Ātman. The gods also took a subordinate position when contrasted with this omnipresent omnipotent, omniscient Divinity. Necessarily, a desire arose to attain union with the Ātman, and there are certain passages in the Bṛāhmanas which teach that men may rise to him by knowledge and find immortality and release from desire and action.¹ Once or twice we receive intimations of the coming of the great doctrine of the identity of the human soul and Brahman;² but as yet the idea is not seriously taken up.

Up to this point Indian thought contained innumerable speculations, some of them barren, others full of promise. But we must draw a broad line between these early flashes of speculative genius and the rise of the earliest Indian philosophy. It was the coming of a new element into Hindu belief and thought that finally led to the production of something like a speculative system. It was the rise of the doctrine of transmigration and karma that proved the occasion at least, if not the cause, of that splendid excitement of the Indian mind which created Hindu philosophy. This fact must never be lost sight of in our study of the evolution of Hindu thought. Clearly, belief in transmigration and karma was taken very seriously by the men of those days. The soul, as they conceived it, was a prisoner fast bound in the system of rebirth, inevitably performing actions which would in turn bind it as fast in another life.

The doctrine of karma fitted in very well with the conception of Brahman-Ātman also. He had been conceived as unborn, immortal, ever free, and also as desireless and actionless. Hence, when the theory of karma and rebirth appeared,

¹ *Taittīyīya B.*, iii 12 9, 8; *Sātapatha B.*, x 5 4, 15 x 6 3, Deussen, 37.

² *Sātapatha B.* x 6 3, 2.

he was the only being in the universe that was not under the sway of karma. Being desireless and actionless, karma could not lay hold of him. Had he been conceived as acting, he would necessarily have been thought of as bound by karma and liable to birth.

From this time, then, forward we recognize three strands of thought in the idea of the Supreme. As Brahman, he is most closely connected with the material world, as the Ātman, he is intelligent, self-conscious spirit, as free from desire and karma, he is actionless.

As a result of the appearance of the doctrine of rebirth and karma we also note a deepening of the contrast between the Ātman and the world. The whole universe is subject to karma, but the Ātman is free. The world is full of sorrow and everywhere in bonds; no spirit is exempt, every man and every animal is suffering or enjoying the inevitable requital of former deeds. Plants also are regarded as under transmigration. The whole creation is held in the hard grip of this remorseless force. Even the gods are recognized as being temporary beings, enjoying for a time in heaven the glorious reward of noble conduct in other lives, but destined each in turn to rebirth and possibly to a return to a far lower condition. They belong to the phenomenal universe as truly as man and the animals. Men could not fail to realize much more clearly than before the pitiful contrast between the world, on the one hand, with its pain and sorrow, its trouble and strife, its petty gods and sacrifices, its transmigration and karma, and the Ātman, on the other, in all its spirituality, power, and freedom. The Ātman was altogether free from the world. It had no share in its action, no relation to its religion or its morality, was undisturbed by its sorrow, unchained by its karma.

Thus thoughtful men began to feel most keenly their position in the world subject to karma and rebirth, to suffering and repeated death. They were filled with a great loathing for these repeated births and deaths. It seemed to them a

miserable thing to be whirled round for ever on this wheel of existence. They longed for something imperishable¹ They could not acquiesce in continuous reincarnation. Was there no possibility of finding release from this galling necessity? Philosophy sprang into existence in response to that urgent question.

It was with the Ātman that the process began. At first the Ātman or Self seems to have been thought of as a sort of conscious essence diffused throughout the universe present in all things, only showing itself most distinctly in man's conscious life, the human self. But as thinkers brooded over these ideas, the truth about spirit as such became clearer to their minds. They thought of the Self as pervading all things and appearing everywhere, yet beyond both space and time, and in, above, and beneath all things, yet truly one. In this way it became impossible to think of the Self as a subtle *physical* essence diffused throughout the universe: that idea was too materialistic and mathematical. Nor could they think of the Self as appearing *in part* in each man, for that was to divide the unity of the divine Spirit. Yet they found within themselves the basis of all their thought about the Self. In their own souls they found the unity, the intelligence, the unlimited thought which they predicated of the Divine. Hence some one was bold enough to say, 'The self in man is not merely the divine Self showing itself at one point; the human self *is* the divine Self, the divine Self whole and complete.' 'I am Brahman'. It was but a natural inference from foregoing thought, yet it was the boldest, the greatest venture ever made by the Indian mind.

Now, note carefully the inevitable result. When this mighty thought came home to a man as true, when he realized that he was the eternal Brahman, he felt instantly transported from his old worldly life to the changeless freedom of Brahman. Being the eternal Ātman, he was *not* bound by

transmigration and karma. In his new knowledge he stood emancipated for ever. Brahman is altogether free. I am Brahman, therefore I am free.

By this experience the man was completely transformed. He had hitherto regarded himself as an individual living being in the multitudinous kingdom of nature, not so very different from the animals, dependent altogether on the things of time and of the senses, hopelessly entangled in karma and rebirth. He now realizes that that is all a dream, that he is a spiritual being to whom all nature is but an empty show,¹ an immortal being to whom fear, sorrow, and death are meaningless,² an eternal being for whom the changes of time are less than nothing,³ a self-sufficing spirit, requiring nothing and therefore desiring nothing, a universal being to whom individuality is but a speck, a free spirit, far beyond the reach of the fetters of karma, whether of past or of future actions. The experience has brought him such a joyous elevation of spirit that he can never fall to the old levels again. He knows himself the eternal God, present in all the universe, the sum and substance of all reality. He stands immortal, fearless, desireless, beyond the reach of pain, or sorrow, or doubt, his experience all ended, his soul filled with the blessedness of a great peace.

The necessary result of this condition of mind was that the man at once gave up all his connexion with the world. He did not belong to the fleeting world, but to the world of Brahman. What had the eternal Brahman to do with worship, children, comfort, pleasure, business, property, or government? Brahman had nothing to do with action, 'that evil thing.'⁴ Now that the man had realized his own true being, he could never return to his old life of vanity, folly, and sorrow. For Brahman alone is peace: 'all else is full of sorrow.'⁵ 'What shall we do with offspring, we who have

¹ *Kāthaka U.*, iv 2, *Māndūkya Kārikā*, 1 16

² *Bṛihadāranyaka U.*, iv 4, 15, *Chhāndogya U.*, vii 26, 2.

³ *Kāthaka U.*, 9. *Taittiriya B.*, III xii 9, 8. I eus en 343 36

⁴ *Bṛihadāranyaka U.* ii 4

this Self and this world? ¹ - Those worlds are in truth joyless.' ² 'Sunless are those worlds, covered with blinding darkness.' ³ How could the man who, through his enlightenment, 'overcomes hunger, and thirst, sorrow, passion, old age and death,' ⁴ return to the life that is filled full of all these evils?

So the result of the transforming experience was that the man abandoned home, marriage, family, property, business, caste, his sacred thread, the worship of the gods the worship of ancestors, and wandered about homeless, seeking solitude, sleeping at the foot of a tree or in a cave, and getting his food by begging. He was therefore called a Renouncer, *sannyāsī*, a Wanderer, *parivrajaka*, a Beggar, *bhikṣu*. The word *sannyāsī*, Renouncer, is the most significant. The idea is that the man surrenders the world. They gave up all amusements, laid aside all jewellery and ornaments, shaved their heads, and wore only a minimum of clothing, or even went stark naked. Each carried a rod and a bowl in which he received the food he begged. It is most remarkable that these men not only gave up everything that makes life comfortable and attractive, but gave up caste also, thus stepping outside Hindu society altogether ⁵. The thoroughness of the process is explainable only by reference to the conception of Brahman, who, conceived as the Absolute, was believed to be altogether untouched by any of the activities of phenomenal existence.

II The deep sincerity and seriousness of the movement stand out perfectly plain in the extraordinary features of the life which we have just described. No thinking man can forbear to admire with the utmost heartiness the boldness of the thought and the supreme strenuousness of the discipline to which these men submitted themselves. We do not wonder

¹ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka U.*, iv. 4, 22.

² *Ib.*, iv. 4, 11.

³ *Īśā U.*, 3

⁴ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka U.*, iii 5, 1.

⁵ For further details see below pp 254, 26-63.

that they made a tremendous impression upon the people of their time and gained influence by their life.

All scholars recognize at once the great insight revealed and the essential truth attained in the conceptions of Brahman as the spiritual Self of the universe and of the identity of Brahman and the individual self. These ideas form the fountain-head of all the greatest thinking that has been done in India.

The conception of the Ātman is clearly and vividly spiritual. While conceived as immanent in all things and transcending all things, as truly omnipresent and universal, yet the Self is described as invisible, impalpable, timeless, spaceless, a perfect unity. Consciousness and omniscience are the very nature and being of the Self, and the perfect unity of the eternal mind is beyond the reach of sorrow, change, or death. So far as it is positive, the conception of the infinite Spirit is true and rational.

The doctrine of the identity of man with God suggests a great many valuable thoughts. No modern thinker is likely to accept the dogma as it stands, but all will agree that it comes so near to being the right expression of a group of priceless truths that it is no wonder that early India hailed it as a revelation. Every one will recognize how close the relationship is between the doctrine and the following ideas: man's dignity and spiritual grandeur, the immensity of his intellectual faculty, the boundlessness of his desires, his passion for immortality; his nearness, likeness, and kinship to God, the immediacy of the intercourse which he may have with God, God's actual presence in every human heart and conscience; and lastly, the spontaneous desire of the soul for union with God. The doctrine is thus of very great value as a testimony to the divine side of human nature.

But we may go one step farther. These men had not merely thought out a conception of God and of man. Their new belief touched them in the depths of their spiritual nature, and overflowed in religious experience. The exalted language

of the best passages of the earliest literature is sufficient to attest the reality of their intercourse with God. In these passages several distinct elements of their experience are frequently described, which further strengthen our inference.

(a) The Ātman has become inexpressibly dear to them.

Were a man to offer this earth surrounded by water and filled with wealth yet is this more than that, more than that?¹

He who sees, perceives and understands this loves the Self, delights in the Self, revels in the Self, rejoices in the Self.²

This, which is nearer to us than anything, this Self, is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than all else.³

(b) The world has lost all its power over them :

Wishing for that world only, mendicants leave their homes. Knowing this, the people of old did not wish for offspring. 'What shall we do with offspring,' they said, 'we who have this Self and this world?' And they, having risen above the desire for sons, wealth and new worlds, wander about as mendicants.⁴

They're simpletons who follow outward pleasures!
They fall into the snare of widespread Death
But wise men, understanding immortality,
Seek not th' Unchangeable 'mid things that change.⁵

He who beholds that Loftiest and Deepest,
For him the fetters of the heart break asunder.⁶

What can he desire who has all?⁷

(c) In their conscious knowledge of God they feel they have reached immortality

On whom the fivefold host of living beings,
Together with space depend,
Him know I as my soul,
Immortal the Immortal.⁸

¹ *Chhāndogya U.*, vii. 11, viii. 4, *Bṛihadāraṇyaka U.*, i. 4, 8; ii. 4, 5;

v. 4, 12-25 *Kāthaka U.*, v. 9-15, vi. 2-3, 9, 14-15

² *Sāṅkhāyana Ā.*, xiii

³ *Chhāndogya U.*, vii. 25, 2.

⁴ *Ib.* iv. 4, 22

⁵ *Mundaka U.*, ii. 2, 8

⁶ *Bṛihadāraṇyaka U.* v. 4, 17

⁷ *Bṛihadāraṇyaka U.*, i. 4, 8.

⁸ *Kāthaka U.*, iv. 2.

⁹ *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā* 1. 16.

All this existing universe
 Moves in the Life from which it sprang
 A mighty terror 'tis, a thunderbolt upraised!
 The men who know It, they become immortal;³

When man forgoes all those desires
 That he within his heart,
 The mortal then becomes immortal,
 And here and now gains Brahman.²

III. The relation of the Ātman to the universe is of so much importance that we must attempt to make the connecting ideas as clear as possible. The human soul was held to be identical with God, as we have seen. We have now to realize that the world also was in a way identified with God. The great phrase in which this idea was expressed is *Ēkam eva aditīyam* 'One there is, without a second.' Frequently the world is simply said to be God. This idea comes, clearly, from the original conception of Brahman as the invisible source and support of all that is. In the earliest literature the phrases are still fluid and living, not carefully defined. Hence thinkers developed the idea in different directions. One would construe the one Existence as physical, absolutely identifying Brahman with the universe, losing the spiritual in the material. Another would strain towards an idealistic interpretation, making the spiritual Brahman the sole existence and almost depriving the physical world of reality. A third would think the monistic thought fully satisfied if he spoke of the world as a product of Brahman and everywhere interpenetrated by him. This last comes nearest the original idea, and, in whatever direction thinkers may have leaned, they never forgot that God was all-pervading.

But, as we have seen, the Ātman, being completely free from desire, was actionless. Thus God pervades the universe in every part, but he does not act upon it. The idea is rather difficult to hold, but it must be grasped if we are to understand the system. God is immanent in the universe all-pervasive,

et he does not act. To conceive the Ātman as acting would be to subject him to karma and therefore to birth, sorrow, and death. Hence these thinkers declared that he was altogether untouched by what happens in the world. Here is one of the passages where this conviction is vigorously expressed.

He, however, the Ātman, is not so, not so (*net nati*) He is incomprehensible, for he is not comprehended, indestructible, for he is not destroyed; unaffected, for nothing affects him, he is not fettered, he is not disturbed, he suffers no harm¹

Sankara constantly emphasizes the actionlessness of Brahman.² From this absolute severance of the all-pervading Ātman from the work and experience of the world several results of the utmost importance followed.

A. The first result of declaring Brahman to be apart from all action is that he is conceived as being above morality. He is quite apart from the petty distinctions of right and wrong. Moral rules belong to human life, not to the transcendent life of the Source of the universe. Brahman is declared to be reality, consciousness, bliss, but he is never said to be righteousness. He is fully recognized as the intelligence behind the universe, but he is never spoken of as having a character, or as being the source and centre of the moral order. Indeed, we are carefully taught that, as the Absolute, he is separate from all action, whether good or bad, just as he is above time and change:

The Self is a bank, a boundary, so that these worlds may not be confounded. Day and night do not pass that bank, nor old age, death and grief, neither good nor evil deeds.³

Distinct from right, distinct from wrong,
Distinct from causes and effects,
Distinct from past and future too,—
What seems to thee like that, declare.⁴

¹ *Bṛihadāraṇyaka U.*, iv. 2, 4, Deussen, 147

² *S.B.E.*, xxiv. 33, 62, xxviii. 355.

³ *Chhāndogya U.* viii. 4, 1. *S.B.E.* i. 120.

⁴ *Kaṭiaka U.* i. 4. Cf. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka U.* v. 4. 5

Hence emancipation is not conceived as being dependent on morality in any way. It arises altogether from knowledge. Realization of one's unity with Brahman is itself release from rebirth and from the world. This clear and comprehensible doctrine is taught without any ambiguity in the early literature and is expounded and defended by the greatest authorities¹. Brahman not being conceived as the source of morality, the method whereby a man realizes his identity with Brahman is not a moral process. Only enlightenment could give the end aimed at, namely complete emancipation from transmigration and karma.

Even when a man has found emancipation, he does not necessarily become moral. Even if he be guilty of vicious actions, his actions do not stain him. Indeed, for the man who has realized his identity with Brahman, all moral distinctions have lost their meaning. Morality is only one element of the phenomenal life, and the difference between right and wrong disappears like all other differences in the blaze of the light of the Absolute. Morality belongs to the unreal world, which the released man sloughs off in completeness on finding release. It belongs to the sphere of 'change' and 'becoming' with which he has nothing more to do. Hence the life of the monk was originally under no moral law.

Then (i.e. when he has realized his identity with the Ātman) he is unaffected by good, unaffected by evil².

He is not exalted by good works, he is not degraded by evil works³.

He who has found it is no longer sullied by any evil deed⁴.

As water does not cling to a lotus leaf, so no evil deed clings to one who knows it⁵.

He does not distress himself with the thought, 'What good have I left undone, what evil done?'⁶.

¹ For Śaṅkara, see *S D E*, xviv 29, 63, &c. for Rāmānuja, *S D E*, xviii 9, &c.

² *Bṛihadāraṇyaka U*, iv 3, 22.

⁴ *Ib* v 4-3.

⁵ *I tīrt a U* ii 9.

³ *Ib*, iv 4, 22.

⁶ *C'hāṇḍo ya U* v 4.

As the water-bird is not defiled by moving in the water, so a liberated yogī is not polluted by merit or by demerit.¹

Evil adheres not to an enlightened man any more than water clings to a leaf, but much sin sticks to the unenlightened man, just as lac to wood.²

Abandoning truth and falsehood, pleasure and pain the Vedas, this world and the next, he shall seek the Ātman.³

And no sin can touch them, though they behave and conduct themselves in any way that pleases them.⁴

Even the *Gītā* contains this doctrine

He who neither loveth nor hateth, nor grieveth, nor desireth, renouncing good and evil, full of devotion, he is dear to me.⁵

Thus, in the earliest days, the search for the Ātman was not conditioned by morality. But soon many men who did not know Brahman but were eager to come to a realization of their identity with him became monks. Thus the monastic life came to be thought of as a discipline leading to knowledge of Brahman. Consequently, three forms of discipline from the life of the hermit (which we deal with in our next chapter)⁶ were adopted. First, the practice of austerities, *tapas* was accepted by many monks as a means of complete conquest over their own souls. The systematic exercises for the regulation of breathing and the control of the intellectual processes called *yoga* were also adopted by many sannyāsīs. Lastly, the law of *ahimsā*, harmlessness, was imposed on all, that is, the law against killing any animal or breaking a twig from any living plant. The conception of Brahman as unaffected by any passion gave the rule for their conduct to outsiders, viz. *Indifference*.⁷ Love and hate, gratitude and resentment, envy and pride are to be all crushed. Hence, also, complete chastity, truthfulness and honesty were demanded. As time went on, the moral side of monastic life produced a beautiful ideal of the passive virtues.

¹ *Mahābhārata*, xii 247, 17.

² *Āpas* ba, 9 3.

³ 7 49f

⁴ *Ib*, xii 299, 7.

⁵ *Yajñ* v 9 22, 268.

Gītā v 9 29.

B. The second result of depriving Brahman of action was that men tended to conceive him as impersonal. He was self-conscious thought, but not will. Hence it did not seem natural to credit him with personality. The earliest texts are by no means consistent in this matter for many passages are distinctly theistic in tone,¹ but there can be no doubt that the farther reflection went the stronger became the drift towards an impersonal Supreme.

C. The third result was this, that Brahman was necessarily conceived as not communicating with man. One of the great statements which they made about him is that he is 'beyond the reach of thought and voice'. This phrase is repeated thousands of times in the later literature. Hence, though Brahman pervades the whole universe, and is close by us all the time, it is quite impossible to worship him, or even to utter prayer to him. He can neither hear prayer nor receive worship. We have already seen that sannyāsīs gave up ordinary Hindu worship. We now see that Brahman could not be worshipped. The monk worshipped no one. His time was spent in realizing his identity with Brahman.

D. The fourth result was that he could not be thought of as creating the universe. Such an act would have involved him in karma. In the earliest literary phrases may be found which come very near representing him as Creator, but the more careful thinkers avoid such statements; and the farther down the stream we go the more clearly do we find the point realized.

These four points will come up again later.²

IV. The relation of these thinkers to popular Hinduism must also be made clear. We have already seen that they gave up completely the worship of the Hindu gods. We must now note that in the earliest texts we find these gods, the priests who worship them, their sacrifices, their liturgy, and the books in which these are enshrined all spoken of

¹ Deussen, 175 ff. see also p. 352, below.

² See below, pp. 244-246, 392-402.

most contemptuously,¹ as worthless to the man who knows Brahman. They seem to have shaken themselves free from popular religion as completely as from ordinary society. The Vedas and the Vedic School were now useless. What need had they to sacrifice to the gods? They no longer desired those things which Hindus expected to receive from the gods in return for their sacrifices.

But, although it is perfectly plain that they stood apart in supreme contempt from the whole Hindu system at first, yet they raised no protest against either the religion, or the life, or the literature. They were simply altogether indifferent to it. Another thing which strikes one as very strange is this, that they did not declare all the old gods fictions of the imagination. We should be inclined to think that any mind vile enough to think its way through so many obstacles to the splendid conception of the one God, spiritual, absolute, supreme, would have had vigour and sense enough to see that the whole mythology of Hinduism was a web of baseless imaginations. But that was not so. All the philosophers up and down the centuries, even the founder of Buddhism himself, believed in the existence of all the Hindu gods. They regarded themselves as superior to these gods, and neither worshipped nor honoured them any longer; but there was not in their thought sufficient real insight to expel the vast noxious growth of the pantheon and the mythology from their beliefs. The gods are transmigrating souls, just like men, only through their conduct in past lives they have risen to the position of divine beings. When their merit is consumed, they will be born again, and may possibly be in very low positions. It is of the utmost consequence that we should remember this in all our study of Indian philosophy, for without it the course of the history is unintelligible.

The discussions which created this system of philosophy did not take place in the Brāhmanic schools, but in the streets,

in the forest and at sacrifices, and men of any caste, and women also took part in them. It was at first a most democratic movement. Yet though the movement was powerful enough to send many men out into the forests as monks, it might soon have withered and have produced no very permanent result.

But in this matter the genius of the Brāhman showed its masterly power once more. Though the new thought was so revolutionary as to drive men away from ordinary Hindu worship and to make them despise the Veda, yet the Brāhman saw how it could be tamed. They introduced it into their schools and taught it as the last and highest subject of the course. Students studied the sacrificial system first, and then the philosophy. They called it the Vedānta, i.e. Veda + end, the final aim of the Veda. Gradually the oral instruction, in which the philosophy was taught, took definite shape and was handed down from teacher to pupil in fixed language, each school having its own sacred deposit. Thus were formed those wonderful treatises which we know as the Upanishads. To this period belong only the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chlāndogya*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Kaushītaki*, and *Kena* Upanishads. They are in simple discursive prose, and show clearly the process of transition from the old sacrificial teaching of the Brāhmanas to philosophy. We must remember that only boys of the three highest castes were admitted to the Brāhmanical schools, that no girl was admitted, and that only Brāhmanas were allowed to teach. Hence, from this time onward, the Vedānta was taught only to men of the three highest castes, and only Brāhmanas were allowed to teach it.

Note how it was possible to introduce the new philosophy into the schools. It could not have happened if the new thought had led the monks to a serious protest against the whole practice of Hinduism as dishonouring to God, but as their attitude to the gods was a good-humoured if superior contempt there was no insuperable barrier between them and

the old religion, and thus the philosophy could be drawn into the schools and shut up under the stern caste rules of the Brahmins

V. We now pass on to the second period of the history of Indian philosophy. The chronology here becomes a little clearer. We may date this period as beginning about 550 B.C. or soon after. The chief mark of the new period is this, that there are now many competing systems of philosophy. The almost complete monopoly enjoyed at first by the thinkers of the Upanishads has passed away. Everywhere one meets a philosopher with a system of his own and with his following of monks. It would be impossible, even if it were advisable, to give anything like a complete catalogue of the extraordinary variety of belief professed in North India at this time. Three things, however, are well worth notice. The first of these is this, that the one aim of all the systems is to win release from transmigration. Each is a philosophy of emancipation. The second point is this, that all these philosophers practised the monastic life, giving up the world and wandering about in beggary. Though their theories of the world varied very greatly, they all agreed that in the ordinary life of man it was impossible, or next to impossible, to win release. The third point is the most interesting of all. Of the many varied schools of thought then existing only three found their way to fame and survived, and these three have one great characteristic in common: they all deny the existence of Brahman, the Absolute. It is surely a matter of the very deepest interest that this, the foundation of a philosophy so striking and so profound, should have already been so seriously discredited that the greatest of the new thinkers of the time should have turned away from it altogether. But the reason is not far to seek. The Brahman of the Upanishads is so exceedingly abstract and tenuous that for the ordinary man it is very hard to grasp the conception and feel its utility. This clearly had become evident to many, so that the acutest thinkers of the period actually formed their systems without

using God. It is of the utmost importance to realize that, though these system-builders denied the existence of a supreme Spirit, they, like the rest, continued to believe in the existence of the Hindu gods.

The three schools which have survived are the Jains, the Sāṅkhyas, and the Buddhists. The three seem to form a sort of progressive series, when taken in the order in which we have named them, and tradition suggests that this is also the order of their appearance.

Jainism in its ideas of the world stands very near essential Hinduism. The world and souls and the gods are all real. It does not accept the doctrine of the supreme Ātman. In this matter we may either regard it as representing the old unconscious thought of the people before the emergence of the belief in Brāhman, or as maintaining a sceptical attitude to that philosophic conception. The former is probably the best way to look at the matter; for early Jainism is more closely connected with animism than with philosophy. There is very little speculation in it. Indeed we shall understand the system best if we think of it as merely a specialization and intensification of the old hermit¹ discipline under the influence of an extreme reverence for life and of a dogmatic belief that not only men, animals, and plants, but the smallest particles of earth, fire, water, and wind are endowed with living souls. Consequently, a very large part of the Jain monk's attention was directed to using the extremest care not to injure any living thing.² So eager were the Jains to part with the world to the uttermost that many of their monks wore not a scrap of clothing. Twelve years of most severe asceticism were necessary for emancipation. After that, if a monk did not wish to live longer, he was recommended to starve himself to death.

The Sāṅkhya system also holds that the world and souls and the gods are real, but a large sceptical element comes in,

¹ See below pp 249-253.

² See below p 38.

for Sāṅkhyas say that the soul is not the organ of the intellectual or volitional life of man.

Philosophically, the system is a dualism. It denies the existence of the Supreme, and teaches the existence of *prakṛiti*, an eternal fundamental substance from which all phenomenal nature arises, and of innumerable individual souls, existing as gods, demons, men, animals, and plants. Every soul is an eternal self-conscious spirit, but without desire, or object, or power to act. It is light, but no more than light. The soul is eternally free, but, through its association with matter, the man believes himself to be bound. Every man who will accept the Sāṅkhya philosophy and lead a life of world-renunciation as a sannyāsī will in time awake to the knowledge of the true relation between the soul and matter and will thus reach emancipation. His soul will be set free from matter, and thereafter will live for ever in that isolation (*kaivalya*) which is its native right and joy.

It is most striking that the individual soul is conceived in this system precisely as Brahman is conceived in the Upanishads. Intelligence, self-consciousness, freedom from desire, from action, from karma, and from suffering, and isolation from phenomenal existence, are the marks of spirit and the spiritual life to early Indian thinkers.

The Sāṅkhya has not had any great influence as a religious system. But the character of its principles compelled those who held it to think out the way in which the things of the universe come into existence and also the relation of the soul to matter. The metaphysical and psychological doctrines which they reached in this process were found to be acceptable in the main to Indian thinkers, and they were therefore adopted at a later date, with or without modification, by all the schools. It would take far too long to expound these ideas fully, but it is important that we should grasp the two most salient features of this part of the system.

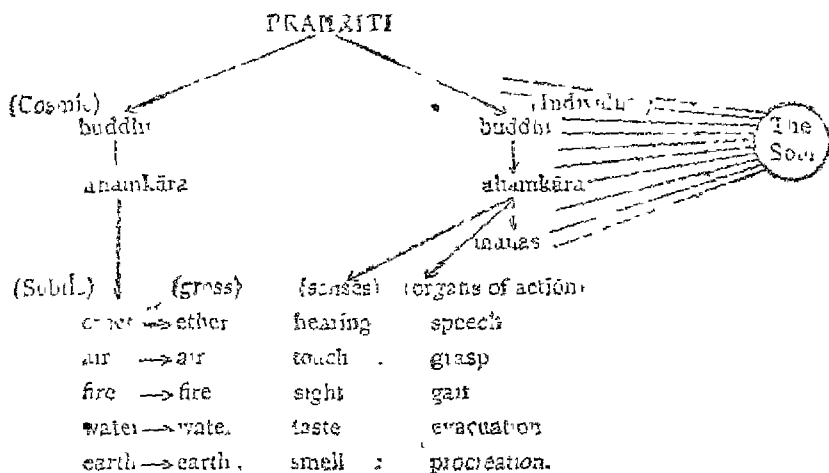
We take first the process whereby the things of nature come to be. During a *pralaya* or period between the dis-

solution and the reappearance of the world, matter is in its quiescent, invisible, impalpable state: it is *prakṛiti*. When the moment for a new creation comes, there is evolved from this primordial stuff a subtle cosmic substance called *buddhi* (intelligence). From *buddhi* is evolved a second subtle cosmic substance called *ahaṁkāra* (egoism). From *ahaṁkāra* are evolved five subtle cosmic elements, earth, air, water, fire, ether. Finally, from these five subtle elements are evolved the actual constituents of matter, earth, air, water, fire, ether. This series of emanations from beginning to end is material.

Next comes the psychological problem. The two subtle cosmic substances, *buddhi* (intelligence) and *ahaṁkāra* (egoism), reappear in the individual. Here *ahaṁkāra* evolves another subtle substance called *manas* (mind), and with it the five senses, each corresponding to one of the constituents of matter, and with them the five organs of action. Once more the whole series of emanations is purely physical. Now, the significant point to be grasped is that the whole of our inner life, intellectual and volitional, is held by Sāṅkhyas to be conducted by these physical substances. Man has no real personal life: the belief that we think and will is a pure hallucination. All that happens within us is the work of these physical powers. The senses, straining outward, obtain impressions of physical things, because they correspond to them. The *manas* receives these impressions from the senses and conveys them to *ahaṁkāra* and *buddhi*. This latter power discriminates the impressions of the senses and acts upon them. Thus all our inner life is physical and there is no personal activity in it.

What, then, does the soul do? The self-conscious soul, enmeshed in the body, sheds the light of its self-consciousness upon these inner organs, and the man, confusing this self-conscious light with the automatic physical work of the inner organs, forms the foolish fancy, 'I personally do all this,' stamps each sense-impression as it passes through *ahaṁkāra* as 'mine' and calls the discrimination and determination of

he *buddhi* mine also. The soul has thus nothing to do with intellectual or moral life—that is all carried on outside the soul. The process may be graphically represented thus:



Gautama, the Buddha, like the Jain and the Sāṅkhya leaders, denied the existence of the Supreme, but he went still further. The Sāṅkhyas had deprived the soul of all real share in life. Buddha took the next step—he denied the existence of the soul altogether.

In contrast with Jainism, Buddhism recommended a mild asceticism, but condemned self-torture, and sought emancipation by *knowledge* and *right living*. Hence the Buddhist monk pressed on beyond the Hindu monk in the matter of morality, and Buddhist ethics exercised a precious influence later on in Hinduism. The knowledge which Buddha taught was summed up in three propositions, known as 'the three characteristics of being', namely,

All its constituents are transitory;

All its constituents are misery;

All its constituents are lacking in an ego

This last proposition is the most important. If nothing has an ego, then the world has no God, man has no soul and a

things are phenomenal. Man consists of five groups of phenomenal elements. Desire is the power that leads to the formation and the preservation of the individual. Buddha's method of life¹ leads to the elimination of desire, and hence to the dissolution of the individual. This insistence on desire produced large results later on.

The Buddhist word for emancipation is *nirvāṇa*, the etymological meaning of which is extinction, i.e. of a light. It is used in two senses. A man who lives faithfully as a Buddhist monk will experience the *nirvāṇa* of lust, hatred, and ignorance. At death he will pass into final *nirvāṇa*; he will not be born again. No one knows whether Buddha believed final *nirvāṇa* to be annihilation or not. He refused to discuss that question. But what is absolutely clear is that the characteristics of final *nirvāṇa* are identical with the negative characteristics of the philosophic Brahman and of the individual soul in the Sāṅkhya system, viz. isolation from phenomenal life, from desire and from action, freedom from transmigration and karma from pain and from suffering. *Nirvāṇa* in Jainism is conceived in precisely the same way.

The Sāṅkhya, Buddhist, and Jain systems had one point in common with the Vedānta: the monks of all four systems practised no worship. The three had also one point of order in common which distinguished them from the Vedānta: only men of the three twice-born classes could study the Upanishads and the system of the Vedānta; while the monastic orders of the other three systems were open to all men. Buddhists and Jains had each an order of nuns also. The Sāṅkhyas remained in Hinduism, while the other two philosophies went out and finally became distinct religions. The reason for this breach did not lie in their doctrines. These could have easily been accommodated within Hinduism. The reason is that they would not submit to being included in the Brāhmanic schools and brought under the authority of

¹ See below pp. 58-29.

Brāhmans, while the Sāṅkhyas agreed. Hence the Sāṅkhya system is to this day acknowledged to be one of the orthodox philosophic systems of the country. Their denial of the existence of God did not stand in the way at all. From this point, then Buddhism and Jainism drop out of Hinduism, though they continue to influence the religion of the country very seriously for more than fifteen hundred years.

VI We know very little about what happened in the school of the Vedānta during the five centuries preceding our era. Doubtless an unending succession of twice-born students learned the Upanishads from the lips of their gurus, and at some time during those centuries the first attempt to systematize the doctrines of the Vedānta in a set of *sūtras* occurred. These are aphorisms of the briefest and most pregnant description, requiring a commentary to make their meaning clear. But of all this we have no record. The one thing that stands out in full certainty is that towards the Christian era the school rose to extraordinary influence among thinking men; for, as we shall see, its leading doctrines won their way in whole or in part into all the leading sects.

But, though we cannot trace the history of the school during those centuries, a little of its literature has survived. The best part of it is the little group of verse Upanishads, the *Kāthaka*, *Īsā*, *Śvetāśvatara*, *Mundaka* and *Mahānārāyaṇa*. The pithy aphoristic character of these poems shows that they were written to be committed to memory. In the main they teach what was taught in the earliest Upanishads, but there are also several new points to notice. There is first the appearance, especially in the *Kāthaka*, of a number of Sāṅkhya ideas and phrases, which show that the two schools were drawing nearer to one another. Along with these are a number of references to Yoga methods, but, as yoga exercises were probably introduced among the monks at a very early period, these need occasion no surprise. The most noteworthy fact, however is that a new theistic strain of thought makes its appearance in these poems, especially in the first three. It is

very slight in the *Kāthaka*, more marked in the *Īśā* but very prominent indeed in the *Śvetāśvatara*. Clearly there was a group of men in the school of the Vedānta who believed that Brahman was personal. In the *Śvetāśvatara* he is identified with the ancient Vedic god Rudra. The grace of God is here spoken of in connexion with Brahman, and the *bhakti*, or loving faith of the devotee of a personal god, is once referred to.

After the Christian era we get a little more light on the history of the Vedānta. By this time the six orthodox schools of philosophy¹ were all in existence, and each was taught by means of a sūtra-manual elucidated with a commentary. From time to time a new set of Sūtras, or an amended edition of an old set, might force its way to the front and become the recognized manual of a school. In other cases a sūtra-work might remain the standard work for centuries. That is what happened in the school of the Vedānta. For many centuries Bādarāyana's *Vedānta-sūtras* have stood supreme. At quite an early date it was recognized as inspired, and ever since has been a part of the canon of the Vedānta. No one knows when it was written. Various dates from the Christian era down to the fourth century have been suggested for it. The tendency at present is towards an early date. It is quite clear that it is founded on earlier manuals.

The theistic tendencies of the verse Upanishads culminate in the *Bhagavadgītā*, a remarkable poem which occurs as an episode in the *Mahābhārata*, and which is one of the fundamental scriptures of the Vishnuite sect. Scholars are not all agreed as to how the *Gītā* came to be what it is, but probably all would acknowledge that, in its present form at least, it is post-Christian. We deal with it at greater length in Chapter IX. Here we merely want to realize its relationship to the school of the Vedānta. The following is the *Prasthāna-traya* or triple canon of the school.

¹ These fall into three pairs, the *Karma Mīmāṃsā* and the *Vedānta*, the *Sākhya* and the *Yoga*, the *Vaiśiṣṭika* and the *Nyāya*.

(a) The *Upanishads*.

(b) The *Āgītā*.

(c) The *Vedānta-sūtras*.

How a sectarian work such as the *Āgītā* is ever came to occupy this position is a most difficult question. It teaches that Brahman is personal, that he is identical with Vishnu, and that he became incarnate in Krishna. This is all very strange in the school which sprang from the teaching of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chhāndogya Upanishads* and which accepts Bādarāyaṇa's *Vedānta-sūtras* as an inspired expression of its teaching. Bādarāyaṇa's work does not acknowledge the doctrine of incarnations and is in no sense sectarian. Some scholars suppose there was a long-continued struggle between the Vishnuite Church and the Vedānta school and that the *Āgītā* marks a stage of compromise in that war. To the present writer it seems more likely that from the very beginning there were Vedāntists who tended to think of Brahman as personal, that they leaned on the theistic expressions of the earliest Upanishads for support, that the theistic elements of the verse Upanishads are evidence of their presence in the school, and that the *Āgītā* marks rather the moment when the leaders of the Vishnuite sect, feeling the need of the support of the Vedānta, joined forces with the theists within the school. The discussion in Chapter IX will make this theory much more comprehensible.¹

VII. Were this a work on the philosophy of the Vedānta, it would be necessary to discuss the work of Śaṅkara at considerable length, but, as our purpose is to understand Hinduism as a religion, we need only draw out the significant points in his historical position. He is said to have been born in South India in the year 788 A. D., and scholars believe he lived

¹ The question is often asked whether the *Āgītā* or the *Vedānta-sūtras* is the earlier work. The truth probably is that each work is the result of growth and progressive editing, and that they were thus parallel rather than successive in origin. If this is so, we can believe that the *Vedānta-sūtras* are earlier than the *Āgītā* as all the commentators say and that the *Āgītā* refers to the *Vedānta-sūtras* in the phrase *brahmanasidhānta* in 4.

until about 850 A.D. He was a *sannyāsī* of the school of the Vedānta: and his fame rests on his commentaries on the Upanishads, the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Vedānta-sūtras*, his greatest work being his *bhāṣya* on the *Vedānta sūtras*.

He was a man of great learning and of high philosophic ability. He worked out the Vedānta philosophy so as to make it a more self-consistent system than it ever was before. Necessarily, in the process certain points became elaborated which give form and character to his interpretation. Of these the most important are the emphatic declaration that Brahman is impersonal, the equally express declaration that the world is not only worthless as compared with Brahman but is in very truth illusion, *māyā*, and the positing of an illusory personal god, the lower Brahman, *Brahmā*, as the ruler of the world of *māyā* and the object of theistic worship.

For our purpose the points that are most significant are those we discussed above¹ in seeking to understand what is meant by the doctrine that Brahman is actionless.

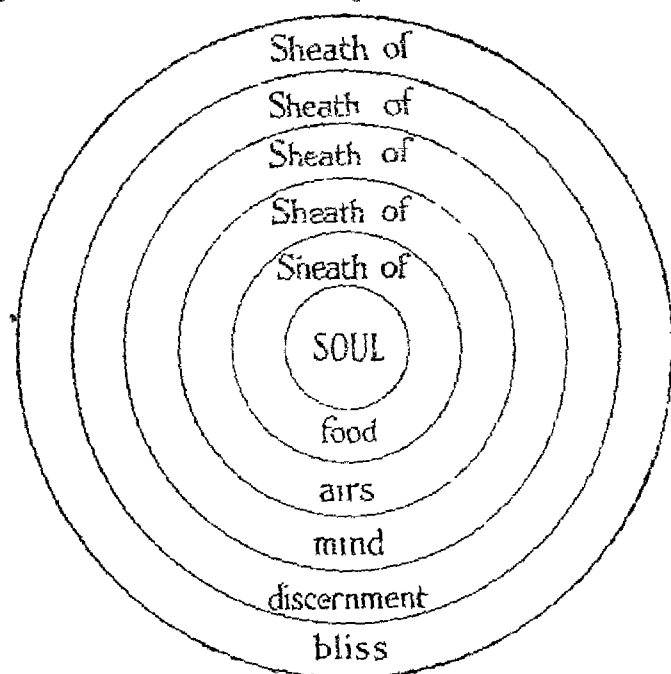
A. Since Brahman is actionless, he is non-moral². We saw how clearly this is recognized in the early literature. We saw also that, according to the Vedānta, nothing but knowledge can obtain emancipation, and nothing else is needed. Morality is without significance in this matter. This point is dealt with by Śaṅkara at the beginning of his great commentary, and is most clearly set forth.

B. Since Brahman was conceived as actionless the early thinkers tended towards an impersonal theology. Śaṅkara's systematic thinking led him to the definite result that Brahman is impersonal. Here theistic thinkers differed seriously from him as we shall see. But Śaṅkara in the severe consistency of his thought made the human spirit impersonal also. In the full Vedāntic account of man as given by him the soul is encased in several physical sheaths, and in these physical

¹ See above, pp. 228-232.

² In Śaṅkara he is ever pure, but he has no character, and no moral act is attributed to him.

sheaths are all the personal and moral faculties. Thus Śaṅkara frankly makes the divine-human spirit impersonal and unmoral. This doctrine of sheaths is clearly derived, primarily from the well-known passage in the ānandavallī of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, but it seems to have arisen under the influence of the Sāṅkhya doctrine set forth above¹ as the following diagram suggests:



VEDĀNIA SĀṆKHYA

mind, *manas* = *manas*¹
 discernment, *vijñāna* = *buddhī*
 bliss, *ānanda*, *anubhāva* = *ānandāra*.

C. Since Brahman is cut off from all communication with man, he cannot be worshipped. The early sannyāsīs, in consequence, worshipped no one. But in Śaṅkara we have some-

¹ pp. 237-239.

thing very different. The early thinkers acknowledged the existence of all the gods; but they disdained to worship these temporary, transmigrating beings Śaṅkara, on the other hand, worshipped them and taught their worship. He says they do not eat the sacrifices but he acknowledges that they enjoy them, and he explains how a god can be present at a number of different places at the same moment to receive and enjoy the sacrifices. Further, he recognized the use of idols, and is himself represented by idols and worshipped as a divinity in many temples to-day.

D. Since Brahman is actionless, he cannot be conceived as the Creator. This thought is very explicit in Śaṅkara. Brahman is the source of the world, but there is no action involved in its production. All that Brahman does is mere sport, *līlā*,¹ and thus involves no karma.

The full significance of the development of the Vedānta philosophy will be considered when we have before us the history of the sects which worship Viṣṇu and Śiva.

¹ See below, IX 403-407.

CHAPTER VII

THE YELLOW ROBE

I IT is most necessary at the outset to distinguish between the practice of austerity and asceticism. Austerity is the endurance of pain in order to gain pleasure, power, or some other material end. Asceticism, on the other hand, is the endurance of pain or the giving-up of comforts in order to gain moral or spiritual ends. Austerity is secular, materialistic; asceticism is moral and religious¹

Among most primitive peoples we find the practice of various forms of abstinence and self-torture, which may be summed up under the word austerities. At certain significant periods in the life of both men and women these have to be undergone as tests of endurance and forms of discipline. In the case of drought or famine or any other serious trouble, attempts are made by means of self-denial or self-inflicted pain to persuade the gods to remove the calamity. All these practices rest on the idea that pains bring gains, and that it is worth while enduring a certain amount of suffering to obtain a greater boon. Sometimes the belief takes the definite form that the gods delight in seeing men under pain, or that by suffering demons may be circumvented, or that 'pain is the root of merit'.²

We find phenomena of the same general character, but much more developed, among the Indo-Aryans, towards the end of the period of the *Rigveda*, and onwards into the time

¹ See art. *Austerities* in *E P E*

² *Āśvaghoṣa B d. haṅkarita* vii. 18.

of the Brāhmaṇas. The word for austerities is *tapas*. It is conceived as a mighty power. The Creator underwent *tapas* before He created the world¹. Truth and Right are born of *tapas*². In the great hymn of Creation in the *Rigveda* the one Reality is born from *tapas*³. Many, the personification of Wrath, is a mighty warrior through *tapas*⁴. The 'fathers', *pitris*, practised *tapas*, when they were on the earth,⁵ so also the seven Rishis.⁶ The purpose they had in view was the winning of bliss⁷. Through their *tapas* they became invincible, they won heaven⁸. Through *tapas* the worlds can be conquered.⁹ The sacrificers speak of themselves as practising *tapas*,¹⁰ and the austerity of the students of the Brāhmanical schools is alluded to in another hymn.¹¹ There is no mention of men living a life of austerity as such, unless scholars be right in thinking that the *Muni* of the following verses is a man who has won his extraordinary powers by *tapas*. As several features of the practice of later days appear in the lines, it is probable that the conjecture is right:

The Munis, girdled with the wind, wear dirty robes of saffron hue
They, following the wind's swift course, go where the gods have gone
before.

The Muni, made associate in the holy work of every god,
Looking upon all varied forms, flies through the region of the air.¹²

Here we have the yellow robe, which through all the centuries has been the commonest symbol of the austere life in India, and also the miraculous power which enables the devotee to fly through the air and to mingle with the gods.

The ends aimed at, then, by these practices at this time were invincibility, warlike prowess, miraculous powers, heaven

¹ *Śatapatha Br.*, XI. v. 8, 1.

² *Rigveda*, x. 190; *Atharvaveda*, xv. 1, 3.

³ *Rigveda*, x. 129, 3.

⁴ *Rigveda*, x. 83, 2-3; *Atharvaveda*, iv. 32, 2-3.

⁵ *Rigveda*, x. 154, 2, 4.

⁶ *Atharvaveda*, xiv. 41.

⁷ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka U.*, vi. 2, 16.

⁸ *Atharvaveda*, x. 11, 11.

⁹ *Atharvaveda*, x. 11, 11.

¹⁰ *Atharvaveda*, x. 36.

¹¹ *Atharvaveda*, x. 36.

Those who practised *tapas* did so with a view to personal gain. It was not yet asceticism, but austerity.

II The second stage is very similar to the first. Here, too, the main aim seems to be materialistic, the endurance of bodily torture, or abstinence from what is pleasant, in order to win magic powers and such like. But ascetic motives now begin to mingle with the old ideas so distinctly, that we are justified in distinguishing this period from the preceding. We have here reached a real asceticism.

The men who show these characteristics lived in the forest and built themselves huts of wood or leaves in some pleasant spot near a stream.¹ The order seems to have come into existence in the period of the *Bṛāhmanas*, perhaps about 700 B.C. They were called *vānaprasthas*, forest-dwellers. We shall call them hermits. The name for a collection of their huts is *āśrama*. This word means literally, 'a place for self-mortification', but in ordinary usage the idea of a residence came to the front. It is therefore translated 'hermitage'. They wore coats of bark or skin,² dressed their hair in matted braids,³ and lived largely on woodland fare. But they kept stores of grain and were allowed a fire to cook their food, if they wished it.

But they did no work of any kind. Their life had but one interest. They gave their undivided time and attention to religious exercises. They kept up the traditional worship of the gods by prayer, hymn, and sacrifice with great care,⁴ although unable to perform the greater sacrifices. They subjected themselves to rather severe discipline. Three points must be noted.

They practised various methods of austerity, *tapas*, enduring extreme cold and heat, strange food, most painful postures, and such like. They believed that by subjecting themselves

¹ *Rāmāyana*, II 131.

² *Gaṇṭamā*, III 34; *Vasishtha*, IX 1, *Baudhāyana*, III. 3, 19, *Āp-
stamba* II 9, 22, 1, *Rāmāyana*, II XXXVII.

³ *Ca. an* 4 *Vasi h* IX *anay na* II 1.

I d a u

to torture they could acquire miraculous powers, for example, the power of flying through the air, of rendering themselves invisible, or of making the gods do whatever they liked. Self-torture was also believed to purify the man's moral nature and to bring him near the gods.

Amongst these men there also gradually grew up a series of physical and intellectual exercises, meant to train the body and the mind. They began in bodily postures and breathing exercises which were intended to subdue the senses and quiet the body, and passed on to intellectual exercises intended to control the attention, to still the mind, and to lead up to ecstatic trances. This discipline was regarded as a bringing of both body and mind under the yoke, and was finally called *yoga*, i.e. 'yoking'.¹

The idea that life is sacred was very strong in hermitages, so that it became the rule that a hermit must not kill any animal.² At first there seems to have been no rule restricting the hermit to vegetarian diet. In several law-books he is allowed to eat the flesh of animals if killed by other animals³ or given him by a householder. The idea was that the man who wanted to live the holy life must avoid taking life. This law was called harmlessness, *ahimsā*. Hence in the *Rāmāyaṇa* one of the most beautiful features of the hermitage is the countless thousands of birds and beasts that live there in perfect peace.⁴

But, although these hermits gave up the life of the city and the quest of gain, they did not cut themselves adrift from society. As we have already seen, they continued the sacrificial worship. The worship of ancestors⁵ was also retained, and distinctions of caste were not lost sight of. The hermit was allowed to have his wife with him in the forest, if he so desired, and children were frequently born in the hermitages. When *Rāma* was sent into banishment, *Sītā* decided to go

¹ Deussen, 384 ff.

² *Baudhāyana*, III, 19, *Manu*, VI, 8.

³ *Bauddhāyana* III, 6 *Gautama* III, 37.

⁴ *Vas. sūtra* IX, 2 *Rāmāyaṇa* I, CIII.

⁵ III, 1.

with him; and they became hermits, wearing coats of bark, living in a forest-hut, and eating woodland fare. Similarly, when the five Pāṇdavas went into exile, Dīrṇapadī accompanied them, and shared their hermit-life in the Kāmyāka forest. In the case, however, of warrior-hermits such as they were the rule against killing animals was not enforced. They hunted the deer of the forest. Many hermits, on the other hand, lived in celibacy, and even gave up the use of a hut. As time went on, the rule tended to become stricter¹

It is not possible to form an exhaustive catalogue of the practices of these austere ascetics. No man will ever be able to tell the self-inflicted horrors which the forests and mountains of India have witnessed. Fasting carried to the point of extreme emaciation is one of the commonest methods. Silence frequently continued for very long periods is another. Among the more usual forms are the endurance of frightful heat or excessive cold, the use of unnatural food; the tolerance of unspeakable dirt, the maintenance of a fixed position for weeks, while unimaginable vermin creep over the body and feed upon it, and painful postures maintained for many months or even years, until the limbs become useless²

Men believed that by self-torture almost anything could be accomplished. They thought that by torture they could get whatever they longed for, whether wealth, strength, valour, kingship, high position, children, or good fortune. The best illustration of this is perhaps the case of Viśvamitra, who, though a Kṣatriya by birth, is said to have attained Brāhmanhood after thousands of years of superhuman austerities. But magical powers seem to have been more desired than anything else. Men sought power over their enemies, over their friends, over nature, over the three worlds, even over the gods. They sought freedom from mortal wounds,³ power to fly through the air, power to procure whatever they wanted. The curse

¹ *Pañcārātra*, 3. 9-14. *Rāmāyana* III v.
² *Rāyana* I lx lxv. III vi. ³ b III

of a hermit was a thing of utmost dread, as may be seen in the plot of the famous Indian drama, *Śakuntalā*.¹ His prayer was equally powerful. The gods and demigods came down at Bharadvāja's request, and prepared a heavenly banquet for Rāma, Sītā, and their train.² The Vindhya bowed their wooded tops that Agastya might pass,³ and Jānu drank up the Ganges at one draught.⁴ Through their austerities many hermits are believed to have lived for centuries or even millenniums, and to have lived without food.⁵ Hermits might even become gods through long-continued austerities. The gods were often afraid that they would be dethroned by some persistent hermit with his unbounded austerities,⁶ and the way in which they usually sought to meet the danger was to send down a heavenly nymph to draw the ascetic away from his self-torture.⁷

A special form of teaching, called *āranyaka*, i. e. belonging to the forest, seems to have been given to young men who were about to enter upon the hermit life. The essential element in this forest teaching was an attempt to spiritualize the sacrifice by means of allegory. This instruction would then form the basis of the hermit's meditation in the forest.

The formation of this hermit practice seems to antedate the appearance of the doctrine of transmigration. In none of the elements of the discipline is the influence of karma visible. Even as early as the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*⁸ this life is mentioned as a distinct religious vocation alongside the life of the student and the life of the householder. In Gautama's *Dharmasūtra*,⁹ which dates from about 500 B. C., detailed regulations are laid down for the hermit life; and we find numerous descriptions of these anchorites and their hermitages in the earliest parts of the *Rāmāyana* and of the *Mahābhārata*.

What was it that led to the formation of this peculiar

¹ Cf. also *Rāmāyana*, I, xlviii.

² *Ib.*, II, xci.

³ *Ib.*, III, xi.

⁴ *Ib.*, I, xlv.

⁵ *Māṇḍūkya* lived ten thousand years on air. *Rāmāyana*, III, xli.
The *Saṃprakāśas* lived on light. *Ib.*, III, vi.

⁶ *Ib.*, III, x.

See below p. 298.

⁷ I, x, 2.

⁸ II, 26-35.

d discipline.¹ Probably in casting about for a mode of life less luxurious and more holy than the ordinary life of cities in North India then, it occurred to them that the simple life led by the far-away ancestors of the race, while they lived in the forest and had learnt neither to till the soil nor weave garments, would be pleasing to the gods and likely to lead to holiness. This would account for the forest life, the hut of leaves, the tangled hair, the coat of bark or skin and the simple woodland fare. In the earliest surviving set of rules for the life of the hermit it is laid down that he must not enter a village, nor step on ploughed land¹. This regulation also fits in well with the idea that this form of asceticism was a reversion to primitive life, like the case of the Rechabites in the Old Testament and other instances elsewhere. In one of the Dharmasūtras² the value of the hermit life is put down to its being like the life of birds and beasts.

III. As we have seen above,³ the new doctrine of transmigration and karma broke in upon the old life and the old thought with elemental force, transforming many things, altering relationships and upsetting the balance of the old theology. The more reflective men, stirred to the very depths by their loathing for the repeated births and deaths and the never-ending sorrow of ordinary existence, were eagerly looking for a means of release.

A. Many suggestions were made; but it was the doctrine of Brahman and of man's identity with God that laid hold of the best men with most force. Realizing the freedom, the spirituality, and the peace of Brahman in contrast with the sorrow and bondage of the world, and believing the startling doctrine of their own identity with Brahman, they felt it impossible to live the ordinary life of men any longer. Emancipated from the fruits of action by their new knowledge, they could not again subject themselves to the enchain-
ing life of action. They must live a life more worthy of

¹ *Gautama*, III. 32-33. Cf. *Manu*, vi. 16.

² *Bṛh. śāyana* III. 1. 22

³ See pp 134 38 2 1

Brahman. They no longer desired wealth, position, success, children, pleasure. Human life and all earthly things were not only empty and worthless but evil powers, clouding the soul with ignorance, and entangling it more and more in the net of birth and death. The whole world of phenomena was inherently antagonistic to the spiritual life. They therefore decided to divest themselves of every element of the common life of man.¹ They renounced the worship of the gods, the worship of their ancestors, caste, home, the use of fire,² marriage, family, money, property, amusements, work of every kind and ordinary food and dress, and lived a wandering life, getting their food by begging. Their aim was to lay aside everything that belonged to the sphere of karma, i.e. the whole world. Thus the word *sannyāsa*, which may be translated 'renunciation', 'world-surrender', was used to designate their practice as a whole. They were therefore called *sannyāsīs*, Renouncers. Since they wandered about and begged their bread, they were called *parivrajakas*, Wanderers, *bhikṣus*, Beggars. All this is true of each of the great schools of the time, of Buddhists and Jains as well as of Hindus. We shall use the word 'Monk' as the best word for covering all schools and all disciplines.

Thus, when a man decided to adopt this life, he gave up his work, turned away from the worship of the gods, abandoned his property, parents, wife, children, home, and, with them, the worship of his ancestors, shaved his head and laid aside his sacred thread,³ his clothes and ornaments. He then put on either a yellow robe, like the Munis of the *Rigveda*, or a mere rag round his loins, or went stark naked. He carried a staff (*ṭanda*) and a beggar's bowl, and daily begged the food he needed. He spent his time largely in silent meditation,

¹ See above, pp. 224-225.

² Hence the *sannyāsī* is buried, not burnt.

³ At a later date it became customary to perform the funeral service over the man who was becoming a *sannyāsī* to indicate that he was aloof from society. *Mahānirvāṇa Sūtra* 239.

feeling solitude, avoiding villages, except when the hour for begging his food came round. He slept in a cave or at the foot of a tree.

Many of the monks in their anxiety to win release, adopted, in addition to all their renunciations, the old forms of self-mortification *tapas*,¹ in the belief that by these potent self-inflicted tortures they would the sooner conquer the stubborn sensual tendencies of the body and the dense ignorance of the soul, which were the chief hindrances to true knowledge and final release. It is most curious that these practices, which were originally resorted to in order to secure material blessings, should now be used to crush out the desire for these things.

The monk usually also adopted the bodily and mental exercises which had been formed in the hermitages for the progressive restraint of body and mind, and were called *yoga*, which means 'yoking', 'means of restraint'.² The physical side of *yoga* was in two parts. The *yogī* practised postures and breathing exercises. He learned to sit absolutely motionless in certain postures which were believed to be favourable to peace of mind and to meditation, thus learning to restrain and control his limbs and his senses. Breathing exercises were believed to purify the man and to enable him to control his inward organs. But both postures and breathing exercises were merely the physical preliminaries and foundations of the intellectual exercises. These began in simple meditation on symbolic words or on religious ideas, but they culminated in an attempt to exclude the phenomenal world from the mind altogether, the idea being that in this way the human spirit would come nearer the Divine. The concentration of the whole intellectual faculty on a single point to the exclusion of all phenomena, the merging of one's consciousness of plurality in an ecstatic vision of unity, was conceived to be the best way of approaching God. To think nothingness was believed to be the path which led to the apprehension of the Absolute

At quite an early date the law of *ahimsā*,¹ which had grown up in the hermitages, was imposed on the monk, forbidding him to kill an animal,² or even to break a living twig from a tree or to destroy seeds.³ All action would produce karma but the act of taking life would produce very bad karma indeed.

As we saw above,⁴ the monk was at first subjected to no moral rules. Morality being no mark of Brahman, it was not demanded of the man who was identical with Brahman. But as the monk begged his food from householders day by day and had frequent intercourse with other monks and the general public, a simple code of conduct became necessary. Here too the conception of Brahman gave the main principle, namely, *Indifference*⁵ as Brahman lived in perfect peace, untroubled by love, hatred, desire, envy, gratitude, ambition, or resentment, the monk was taught to conquer and crush out all his passions. He must neither love nor hate any one, must show neither gratitude for favours nor resentment at cruelty. He must be indifferent to all men, feeling neither attachment for the good nor repulsion for the evil.

The learned look with indifference alike upon a wise and courteous Brāhman, a cow, an elephant, a god, or an Outcaste.⁶

This rule was quite in keeping with the monastic ideal of complete control over both body and mind. Unless a man's mind was at peace with itself, with others, and with the outside world, it was impossible to induce that motionlessness of the body and that stillness of the soul which were sought so eagerly. Hence the monk was bid to be gentle in speech and behaviour to all, never resenting an injury nor answering insult with hard words, but ever preserving a peaceful and humble demeanour.⁷ The perfect detachment of Brahman also necessitated complete chastity on the part of the monk:

¹ See above, p. 250.

² *Bauddhāyana*, ii. 10, 18, 2; *Vasishtha*, x. 3.

³ *Gautama*, iii. 20; 23.

⁴ See p. 230.

⁵ See p. 231.

⁶ *Gītā*, v. 18, cf. v. 19, ix. 29.

⁷ *Vasishtha*, x. 29-30. Iussen, 72-382.

There thus grew up a code of behaviour expressed in five vows, which every novice had to take (1) ahimsā, (2) truthfulness, (3) no stealing, (4) chastity, (5) liberality.¹ Gradually the value of character for the development of the monk made itself more distinctly felt, and so, here and there, in the verse Upanishads and later literature, moral conditions for the attainment of Brahman appear :

Who has not ceased from wickedness,
Who is not tranquil and concentrated,
Whose heart is not at peace,
Cannot attain him even by knowledge²

B As time went on, the number of schools that sought to win emancipation became exceedingly numerous. The variety of philosophic conception of God, man, and the world taught at the beginning of the fifth century B C in northern India from Taxila to Rājagriha is perfectly wonderful. In an old Buddhist book sixty-two distinct heresies are briefly characterized³. They differed in their monastic rules to some extent also. Most of these schools soon passed out of existence, and so need not detain us; but a number of those that existed then have had a very great history, and their beginnings are full of instruction for us.

Each was a sort of spiritual brotherhood, for the monks of each school were closely bound together in a religious order. Its disciplinary rules were never divulged;⁴ and its meetings were held in secret. Some schools had orders of nuns as well as of monks.

The school of Mahāvīra, which is to-day Jainism,⁵ holds a most interesting position among the orders of the sixth century before Christ. The school has no doctrine of God at all, and must therefore be classed as atheistic. Indeed, their main ideas are animistic: not only men, animals, and plants, but also the smallest particles of earth, fire, water, and wind are held

¹ *Buddhāyana*, ii. 10, 18, 2

² *Kāṭhaka U.*, ii. 24

³ See Rlys Dav ds, 1 *see can Lects* 3 ff

⁴ *S B E* xxxv 264, 266

⁵ See above p 236

to contain souls. This doctrine led to their giving extreme emphasis to the doctrine of ahimsā¹. The practice of a Jain monk was most carefully regulated, in order that he might avoid doing the slightest injury to any living thing. Hence his broom to sweep insects from his path, the prohibition of the use of cold water, and other regulations. But, apart from that, they were amongst the most extreme of the Renouncers. They gave up all care for their bodies, plucked out their hair by the roots; wore only a rag of clothing, or else lived stark naked, ate no savoury food, drank no cold water; and never bathed. They also carried the practice of self-torture to great extremes. Meekness and uncomplaining endurance were amongst their highest virtues. Twelve years of severe ascetic practice were necessary to win release. After that a Jain monk was allowed to starve himself to death, if he chose to do so. At a later date monasteries were introduced into Jainism.

Gautama, the Sākya saint, is the founder of Buddhism². He was a junior contemporary of Mahāvīra. He left home, when he was a young man, determined to find release. After following two masters for some time, he resolved to be his own master, and began a course of excessively severe torture, consisting of self-inflicted pain and extreme fasting. But, when he was emaciated to the last degree and his life was on the point of flickering out, he came to the conclusion that such practices were useless as means towards emancipation, and gave them up once and for all. Hence the old tapas,³ self-torture, has no place in Buddhism. Its original aim was material benefit, and its adoption at a later date as a means of winning release was very curious. Gautama's strong good sense enabled him to see its valuelessness and to reject it. But he practised and also imposed on his followers the abandonment of all the ordinary forms of human life. He also practised and taught the law of ahimsā. His conception

See p. 250.

¹ See above p. 239.

² See pp. 248-249.

of release—his name for it was *nirvāṇa*—was largely moral, and he saw that it could only be reached under certain moral conditions. Consequently, his rule had a great deal more of humanity and consideration in it than other disciplines. He bade his monks and nuns wear decent if simple clothing, allowed them a sufficiency of plain food, permitted the erection of monasteries for them and consented to many small comforts. Indeed, although he demanded the complete renunciation of home life, business, and ordinary society, a new, happy, quiet, social life sprang up in the monasteries; and thus the most noticeable evils of monasticism were softened. Buddhist monks and nuns wore clothing of a dull saffron tint, and thus through the spread of Buddhism far and wide, the yellow robe became the chief symbol of asceticism all over Asia.

The other schools of the period do not stand out with sufficient clearness to make it worth our while to attempt to describe them, and during the next thousand years all the innumerable varieties of ascetics were included either in orthodox Hinduism, in Buddhism, or in Jainism. Further, while ascetic practice varied greatly in details and in rigour, the three great spheres of aim and effort which we have described, austerity, asceticism, and world-surrender, cover all that monasticism stood for.

C. Early asceticism imposed its ideals in part on Hindu society. From a very early date the students of the Brāhmanical schools had to practise asceticism, living in complete chastity, eating simple food, and enduring light austerities. The householder was also taught to practise austerities throughout his life.

At a later date a new ideal was set before the Brāhman. He was advised to spend twelve years at school, to pass his prime as a householder, and, when he had reared a family, to retire as a hermit to the forest. All three stages were then called *āśramas*, i.e. stages in self-mortification, the life of the student and of the householder obtaining recognition as ascetic as well as the hermit life. Later still probably after

the Christian era, the life of the monk was added as a fourth *āśrama*. At the end of his days the Brāhman was to give up even the hermit life, and become a wandering mendicant.¹

We have already seen how the widow came under ascetic discipline.²

D There are certain large controlling ideas which were common to all the ancient ascetic schools, whether Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain. The fundamental convictions which underlie the whole movement, namely, that the true life of the soul is actionless, and that the ordinary life of man exercises a very evil influence upon religion and spirituality, have been already noticed. But besides these foundations, so to speak, part of the superstructure in each case was common to all the schools.

I One of the curiosities of the thought of the period is this, that, although the Sāṅkhya, as well as the Buddhists and the Jains, absolutely denied the existence of the Supreme, they continued, along with the Vedāntists and all other thinkers, to acknowledge the existence of the personal gods and all the heavenly host of Hinduism. It is most curious to find these divine and semi-divine beings reappearing in Buddhist and Jain teaching, and bringing with them large pieces of the old mythology.

2 But, although the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain monks took all the gods, demi-gods, angels, and other orders of the Hindu pantheon for real beings, they gave them a very humble place; and they held the whole sacrificial system by which they were worshipped in profound contempt.³ In consequence, they also regarded the whole of the ritualistic literature of the Brāhmanas as absolutely worthless. No proof need be given of this with regard to Buddhists and Jains, for they rejected the Brāhmanical literature absolutely. But the same contempt is found clearly expressed in the sayings of those who held the Ātman philosophy:

¹ *F R E* art. *Āśrama*.

² Deussen 61 62

³ Above pp 100-101

So then, after that the Brāhman has rejected learning (*pāṇḍitvan. nirvīḍya*), he abides in childhood.¹

Very soon, however, the Brāhman effected a reconciliation with the philosophers by the introduction of their system into the Vedic schools, so that in some of the later Upanishads sacrifices are recognized as of real value. For example, in the *Maṭṭrāyaṇīya* we are told that the fire-laying for the ancestors is a sacrifice to Brahman,² and later works are still more definite. Finally, the Upanishads took their place as part of that very Brāhmanical literature which the early thinkers had completely rejected.

3 The ascetic thought of India, Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain held the human body in serious contempt and even loathing, as the following quotations show.

In this evil-smelling, substantial body, shuffled together out of bones, skin, sinews, marrow, flesh, seed, blood, mucus, tears, eye-gum, dung, urine, gall, and phlegm, how can we enjoy pleasure?³

This monstrous wound hath outlets nine,
A damp, wet skin doth clothe it o'er;
At every point this unclean thing
Exudeth nasty, stinking smells.⁴

4 All schools also agree that the senses and the intellectual faculties must be severely restrained. In one of the earliest Upanishads the monk is urged to 'bring all his organs to rest in the Ātman',⁵ and the demand is constantly repeated later. All schools of thought refer the intellectual, emotional, and active life, not to the soul, but to certain subtle physical organs, called *nāḍas*, mind, *ahamkāra* egoism, *budhhi*, understanding, by the Sāṅkhyas.⁶ Monks were urged to reduce these organs to passivity. Here is a stanza from the *Kāṭhaka Upanishad*.

¹ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka U.*, 3. 5. 1, Deussen, 58.

² Deussen, 64.

³ Quoted in Deussen, 284, from *Maṭṭrāyaṇīya U.*, 1. 3.

⁴ Warren-423. ⁵ *Chhāndogya U.*, viii. 15.

⁶ c p 39

When the five tools of knowledge
Stand, with the Manas, absolutely still,
And the understanding makes no move,
Then that is called the highest state¹

The following is from a Buddhist sutta :

Perceiving this, O priests, the learned and noble disciple conceives an aversion for contact, conceives an aversion for sensation, conceives an aversion for perception, conceives an aversion for the predispositions, conceives an aversion for consciousness. And in conceiving this aversion he becomes divested of passion ; and by the absence of passion he becomes free, and when he is free he becomes aware that he is free, and he knows that rebirth is exhausted, that he has lived the holy life, that he has done what it behooved him to do, and that he is no more for this world.²

This whole process was believed by all schools to culminate in the highest form of meditation and contemplation called *samādhi*, wherein

subject and object, the soul and God, are so completely blended into one that the consciousness of the separate subject altogether disappears, and there succeeds that which is described as *nirālmakatva*, i. e. selflessness.³

5. There is one point in the practice of saunhyāsīs of all schools which shows very clearly how completely they had broken with the Brāhmanical system. When a man decided to become a monk, he repudiated his father and mother, his wife and his children, and declared they had no further claim upon him. He simply left them, adopted the houseless life, and allowed them to get their living as they might. There were many heartrending scenes in consequence. The case of the Buddha is well known. Another famous case is that of Rāja Gopī Chandra. The pathetic but fruitless appeal made to him before his departure by his beautiful young queen has found a place in Bengali literature.⁴ The idea was that the monk, through his abandonment of ordinary society,

¹ *Kāthaku U.*, vi. 10, cf. iii. 13; *Svetāśvatara U.*, vi. 9.

² *Arran* 152. ³ *Deussen* 392.

⁴ Dinesh Ch. Sen *Bengal Language and Literature* 58 ff.

was cut away completely from it, had risen to a higher sphere, and could not in any sense be held responsible for those still living in the system which he had repudiated. To this day the old ideas remain unchanged. If a man wishes to become a *sannyāsī*, he may simply leave his wife without making any provision for her. The wife may go to her husband and beg him to return; but she has no claim upon him, and he feels no obligation, nay, rather perhaps resents her interference¹.

6 It has often been asserted that early Buddhist and Hindu monks were vegetarians. This seems to be a mistake. In those early days people did not condemn the eating of flesh: it was the killing of the animal that was wrong. The Buddha transgressed no Buddhist law when he ate the pork which gave him dysentery and killed him. The idea at the basis of *ahiṃsā* is that all life is sacred, and that no holy man can take life. Hence the monk, whether Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain, was forbidden to kill any animal, or to take the life of a twig by breaking it from the stem, or even to crush a living seed. The reaping of a field of wheat or rice would have been quite as heinous a sin as killing a deer or an ox. This is one of the reasons why it was a rule for monks of all orders to beg their food: they could never do any of the cruel work of killing plants or animals, but received their food already cooked from the hands of householders. The taking of life was not so serious for the householder, as he did not profess to be a saint. The same explanation is required with regard to the hot water which was the only drink of the Jain monk. Cold water has so many lives in it that he must not drink it on any account; but if a householder kills all the animalculae by boiling the water, he may then use it.

The rule of *ahiṃsā* was binding only on the hermit and the monk, but it was recognized in Buddhism that the layman

could win merit by doing all in his power to save animal life. Hence Aśoka the Buddhist emperor of the third century B. C., used his imperial position for this purpose, issuing several edicts to restrict the slaughter of animals in various ways¹. As animal sacrifice was still one of the most prominent features of Hinduism, these laws must have been unpopular in Brāhman circles. It is noteworthy that it is only animal life that Aśoka legislates for. From this time forward we hear far less of the law against destroying vegetable life.

It was only when the original reverence for all life, vegetable as well as animal began to fall into the background and the idea of the merit of saving animal life became prominent that the conception arose that the monk ought to restrict himself to a vegetarian diet. How this idea passed from the monk to the layman we shall see in a later chapter.²

IV When we turn to our own times we find that the hermits have disappeared, and also all the ancient orders of monks except the Jains. Modern Jains are divided into three sects: Digambaras, Svetāmbaras, and Sthānakavāsīs. Each sect has its own order of monks, and the two latter have nuns also.

Śaṅkara, at once great Vedantist and great champion of Hinduism against the Buddhists, reorganized the ascetic orders in his day. Among the changes introduced by him was the adoption of the use of monasteries from Buddhism. The modern word is *matha*. The leading monasteries which he founded became centres of sacred learning which were of inestimable service in the long-continued struggle with the rival faith. Four of these monasteries are still in existence, the head of each bearing during his term of office the master's name, Śaṅkarācārya.

Rāmānuja, the great Vishṇuite leader of the twelfth century, is said to have founded a very large number of monasteries, and their use has passed into all the modern *bhakti* sects.

¹ Vincent Smith's *Aśoka*, 56-57.

² See pp. 350-356

² See pp. 322-382

Each religious leader—Madhva, Ramananda, Kabir, Gorakh-nāth, Nānak, Dādū, Vallabha, Chaitanya—not only gathered the laity round him but formed his own order of ascetics.

Of all these orders two are much nearer the ancient sannyāsī in practice than the others, viz. those that have held by Śankara's rules, and those that follow Rāmānuja. In the life of these strict sannyāsīs there are four stages. Each is called a *Kuṭīchāra* sannyāsī to begin with. In the later stages of their progress they are called successively *Bahūdaka*, *Haiṁsa*, *Paramahaiṁsa*.¹

Śankara's immediate followers were called *dandīs*, because they carried the danda,² or rod, which the original sannyāsī usually carried. Since they were divided into ten groups, each ruled by one of Śankara's disciples, they were called *dasuṁhīs*, ten-name sannyāsīs. Four only of these ten groups retain their original purity, the names being *Tīrtha*, *Āśrama*, *Sarasvatī*, and *Bhārati*. These still refuse to receive as members any others than Hindus of the three twice-born castes; and, as Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas are so few, they are practically restricted to Brāhmans. These men are usually called *Ekadandīs*, i.e. single-rod men, to distinguish them from the followers of Rāmānuja. They carry a rod with a little red pocket attached, like a flag, to its upper part. The sacred thread which the man discarded when he became a sannyāsī is contained in the pocket.

Rāmānuja's followers are called *Tridandīs* three-rod men, because instead of the single danda they carry three rods fastened together. Another difference between them and the *Ekadandīs* is that they retain their caste³ and the sacred thread.³ The triple rod also has a little red flag, but it contains the cloth for straining water, which the man carries as a sannyāsī. Only Brāhmans are admitted to this order.

Like all other modern ascetics these strict sannyāsīs worship some god or gods belonging to the Hindu pantheon. That is

¹ Deussen 79.

² See p. 54.

³ *an anu a, 70 72 13*

a point in which they are like the hermit and unlike the ancient sannyāsi. All modern ascetics are sectarian. Eka-dandīs are Śivaite, while Tridandīs are Viṣṇuīte. Both these orders contain a considerable number of learned men.

The remaining six groups of Daśnāmis are open to Hindus of all castes, and in many other points they have departed from the ancient discipline. In fact, they are on the same level as the other modern ascetic orders. We shall call all these ordinary ascetics *sādhus* to distinguish them from strict sannyāsis of the Ekadandī and Tridandī orders.

The practice of the sādhu is a hybrid, a combination of the life of the ancient hermit and the ancient sannyāsi. In general, the discipline is of the latter type, but the rules have been relaxed in several particulars. Many of the orders admit men of any caste.¹ Discipline is rather lax in most cases. All the orders are sectarian, practise sectarian worship, and read sectarian literature. Sādhus believe that the pilgrimage is a valuable religious exercise. They spend their time in long leisurely journeys to the great places of pilgrimage, visiting all the fairs and festivals on the way, and halting now and then at a monastery or it may be, all alone at some pleasant spot. The sādhu has a few more belongings than the ancient monk had. The rosary was first used in the worship of Śiva, but it is now found in the service of all the gods, the sects varying in the material and in the number of the beads. The old staff and bowl are almost universal. The pipe has been added, and hemp and other drugs are often smoked. The yellow robe is still common, but nakedness, a scanty loin-cloth, or an outfit of rags are almost as frequently encountered.

The sādhu usually wears a sect-mark on his forehead and frequently carries some sect-symbol. If he recognizes Śiva, he will carry a trident or wear a miniature *linga*,² and in his hut will be found a human skull, a tiger skin, or a *damaru*

dium. He will probably have his whole body smeared with white ashes. This is in imitation of Śiva, the Destroyer, who is fond of the burning-ghat, and is believed to smear himself in this way.¹ When he settles in a place, he will set up a *linga* for worship. If he recognizes Vishnu, he may possess a discus, a *śālagrāma* stone, a conch shell² or a *tulsi* plant. Wherever he settles, he will set up an image of Rāma, or Kṛishṇa, or whatever form of Vishnu he adores.

The old rule that a monk may not adorn himself is relaxed in many orders, and the result is often very picturesque. The hair is dressed in some most unusual fashion or is allowed to grow wild and matted. The body is marked, or the dress is arranged, so as to recall the god whom the sādhu worships. Showy badges are worn indicating the places of pilgrimage he has visited.

A number of new forms of tapas are found among sādhus. One frequently sees the bed of spikes, meant to represent Bhīshma's arrowy bed described in the *Mahābhārata*. Shoes filled with spikes are not uncommon. Now and then an ascetic will hang head downwards from a tree above a smoky fire, or wear an enormous weight of chains, or use mechanical means to keep down his passions, or measure his length along the road for hundreds of miles. Most of the old forms of austerity are also in use. Yoga practice is still common, but the mental exercises are usually sectarian.

Asceticism has greatly deteriorated in modern times. There is no serious thought-movement in it; a large proportion of sādhus are ignorant men; many are grossly immoral; some of the orders are coarse and indecent, and Hindus acknowledge that there are but few sincere and earnest men amongst them. Yet here and there one meets a man of character and learning.³

There are certain other phenomena connected with asceticism which are well worth our notice.

¹ Pope, 159

For modern sadhu see O'nan.

² See pp 374 362 392.

V. It was universally believed in ancient India that, if a hermit lived a life of purity and austerity, or if a monk achieved release and lived the life of world-abandonment faithfully his body would gradually become spiritualized, so that it would be very different in appearance from the bodies of ordinary men. Not only would all signs of passion disappear from the features and frame, the anatomy and the material elements of the body would actually change until, refined and etherealized, it became a fit expression of the exalted spirit within. The muscular system would become less prominent; the trunk would become smooth and delicately shaped, the man would glow with beauty and supernatural light, and the physical nature of the frame would be so transformed as to be no longer subject to gravitation and other ordinary restrictions.

The earliest references to these results of asceticism occur in the original *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. We read of a hermitage where

Dwelt many an old and reverent sire
Bright as the sun or Lord of Fire,
All with each earthly sense subdued
A pure and saintly multitude

Of Sarabhaṅga we are told that his

lustre vied
With gods, by penance purified;²

Agastya is said to be

Through fierce devotion bright as flame;³

and Bharadvāja is⁴ described as

Calm saint, whose vows had well been wrought,
Whose fervent rites keen sight had brought.⁴

We do not meet with the idea in the earliest Upanishads, but in the *Śvetāśvatara*

¹ III -

² III xii.

³ III v

1 v

Acute health, freedom from desire,
A fair countenance, beauty of voice,
A pleasant odour;¹

are stated to be among the first results of yoga. The *Yoga-sūtra*² does not mention beauty and spiritualization as a result of yoga, but makes much of etherization.

Buddhism followed Hinduism in this matter. Of a monk who has attained wisdom it is said in the Pāli books, 'Placid, brother, are all your organs of sense, clear and bright is the colour of your skin'.³ Gautama is said to have radiated a golden sheen,⁴ and his body is spoken of as being like the trunk of a lion,⁵ that is, smooth, lithe, slender-waisted. In the later *Questions of King Mūhinda* we are told of Buddha that 'he was golden in colour with a skin like gold, and there spread around him a glorious halo of a fathom's length'.⁶

Of Mahāvīra, the Jina, it is said, that he was 'refulgent like the sun, pure like excellent gold', that 'like a well-kindled fire he shone in his splendour'.⁷ He was very beautiful.⁸ His body emitted an exquisite perfume.

When, at a later date, Buddhists began to use images, this belief produced some of their noblest qualities. The images of the Buddha owe their suggestion of deep spirituality partly to the meditative pose of the body and the calm of the features, but largely also to a peculiar treatment of the trunk whereby everything speaking of activity, effort, and sense pleasure is excluded, and 'an extreme simplicity of form and contour' gives a powerful impression of religious exaltation and balanced peace. The Buddhist sculptor actually succeeded in creating a style which gives expression in stone to a lofty spirituality. The same type of religious art is found also in Jainism and Hinduism. Indeed, all the best image-sculpture of India owes its power to this mighty mode of artistic speech. Thus the

¹ n. 13. Deussen, 395. Cf. *Uaṭṭāyaṇa* U. i. 2.

² Book III.

³ Warren, 38

⁴ Warren, 71, 73.

⁵ Grunwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, 161

⁶ *S. B. E.*, xxv. 116.

⁷ *S. B. E.*, xii. 261

⁸ *S. B. E.*, xvii. 256-258.

loftiest Indian conception of divinity, whether among Hindus, Jains, or Buddhists, is an idealization of the wandering ascetic. This aspect of Indian art is most convincingly expounded by Mr. E. B. Havell in his *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, and the dignity and beauty of the finest examples of Indian plastic art are brought out with surpassing strength in the plates in the same volume.

The shining radiance of the ascetic's body referred to above reappears in the halo which in Buddhist sculpture so often encircles the head or even the whole body of the Buddha. This, too, was copied on occasion by Jain and Hindu artists. The golden hue of Buddha's body has found further expression in the custom of gilding Buddhist images prevalent in all Buddhist lands.¹

VI. We have seen that the Muni in the *Rigveda* flies through the air and that the hermit of a later date acquires magic powers and wins all his desires, even to the dethronement of the gods, by means of his austerities. It is a most curious fact that these miraculous results of the endurance of pain were finally attributed to the houseless monks, who were believed to have emptied themselves of all desires, and who despised heaven and all the gods. In all the schools these powers are regarded as a natural outcome of sainthood,² although they are often closely associated with the practice of yoga, especially with its more advanced forms.

In the earliest Upanishads they do not occur, but, when we reach the *Śvetāśvatara*,³ we read

He knows nothing further of sickness, old age, or suffering,
Who gains a body out of the fire of yoga,

the *Maitrāyaṇa*⁴ has a similar passage; and, later, the *Aṃtibindu*⁵ declares that the yogī after three months attains to knowledge, after four to the vision of the gods,

¹ *J. R. A. S.*, 1911, p. 715.

² *Āpastamba* ii 9, 23, 7-8.

³ ii. 12 Deussen 395. Cf. vi 13.

⁴ 28 ff. Deussen 395.

⁵ v 28.

after five to their strength, and after six to their absolute nature.

In the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali, which dates from the middle of the second century B C, these powers are described, classified, and explained as arising from yoga exercises.

What Gautama, the Buddha, may have believed on this subject we do not know; but in the books of the Pāli canon he and his followers are credited with the most extraordinary powers. Perhaps the following paragraph will give most succinctly the early Buddhist belief.

If a Bhikkhu should desire, Brethren, to exercise one by one each of the different Iddhis, being one to become multiform, being multiform to become one, to become visible, or to become invisible to go without being stopped to the further side of a wall, or a fence, or a mountain, as if through air, to penetrate up and down through solid ground, as if through water, to walk on the water without dividing it, as if on solid ground, to travel cross-legged through the sky, like the birds on wing, to touch and feel with the hand even the sun and the moon, mighty and powerful though they be, and to reach in the body even up to the heaven of Brahma; let him then fulfil all righteousness, let him be devoted to that quietude of heart which springs from within, let him not drive back the ecstasy of contemplation, let him look through things, let him be much alone!¹

All this is continued in Buddhist *Mahāyāna* literature and exaggerated beyond all bounds.

A cursory glance through the life of Mahāvīra in the *Kalpa Sutra* of the Jains will show that they attributed the same powers to their Jinas, Kevalins, and holy men of other degrees. Of Mahāvīra it is said, 'like the firmament he wanted no support; like the wind he knew no obstacles.'²

These beliefs were accepted by Śāṅkara³ and Rāmānuja,⁴ and can be traced in all the bhakti⁵ sects of the last thousand

¹ *Akankheya Sutta*, 14, *S B E*, xi 214 ff

² *S B E*, xii. 260.

³ *S B E*, xxxiv 200, where we are told a yogī may assume many forms.

⁴ *S B E*. xlviii 331. Cf. *Rāmānuja*, 182, where the philosopher is said to have become a thousand-headed serpent and to have a guinea with the Jains with each head.

⁵ See below p 386

years. Many of the old marvels are repeated and new stories, often grotesque in form, appear. Madhvāchārya for example, was able at any time to eat a meal fit for an ox.¹ Chaitanya is credited with the same power.²

In the last few centuries hypnotism, mesmerism, jugglery, spiritualism, and quackery in general have been used by yogis to win the reputation of supernatural power. The production of a state of coma or trance was carefully practised, until adepts could actually allow themselves to be buried for a lengthened period and come out from their entombment alive. Until recently, yogis now and then pretended to possess the power of levitation and such-like. We need scarcely say that they were more indebted to fraud than to miracle. Madame Blavatsky's escapade settled the general question for all thinking men.

This belief, that the saint possesses supernatural power, is the source of one of the most notable elements of the Buddhist cult namely relic-worship. The power is a sort of holy contagion which inheres in the saint's body and in everything he has used.

The same reasoning lies behind a practice which is found in all the Hindu sects. When a disciple meets his religious teacher, *guru*,³ he prostrates himself before him, and takes some of the dust from his guru's feet and places it on his head. In many of the sects it is considered a high spiritual privilege to be allowed to drink the water in which the guru has washed his feet. Holiness is held to be physically communicable.

VII When the monastic movement first appeared in India, it was the greatest intellectual and religious force of the time. It laid hold of all the noblest minds and ruled them, and for many centuries thereafter the highest spiritual life of the country found for itself in its discipline a sufficient, a satisfying expression. Nor need we wonder. Surely no one can study this great old history without being struck with the splendid

¹ *Madhva*, 36-97, 124-176, 177.

² S K G ose *Lo d Ga rangā* vol. II.

³ See below p. 402.